

COLLECTS.

.

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A SHORT AND FAMILIAR
EXPOSITION OF
THE COLLECTS OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

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SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.

THE following attempt to explain the Collects of our Church, was suggested from a method of instructing a few children under the Author's care, who learned to repeat on Sundays the Collect appointed for the day, and were asked such questions out of it as seemed suitable to their age and capacity. This will account for its being drawn up in a catechetical form, as well as for the answers to the questions proposed being generally shorter in some of the first Collects, than in the succeeding ones.

The Collects of our excellent Church most probably derive their name from the substance of the Epistle or Gospel, and

sometimes of both, being *collected* together, as they generally are in these short prayers. With this view, the Author has frequently referred to them for the confirmation of what he has advanced: and this method, which the Church has observed, in turning those portions of Scripture into subjects of prayer, may suggest an useful hint to Christians in general to follow the same practice, by making what they read from time to time in the word of God the matter of their addresses to the Throne of Grace.

One particular excellence of the Collects, is the variety of matter contained in them. Though short, they are very comprehensive, and exceedingly spiritual and devout. They may indeed be considered as a brief summary of the Christian religion, treating of the nature and attributes of God; the divinity, incarnation, life, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, mediation, and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his coming again to judg-

ment ; the nature, office, and operations of the Holy Ghost ; the state and condition of man ; the nature and necessity of regeneration, conversion, repentance, faith, obedience, and all those graces which God implants in the hearts of believers by his Holy Spirit. They treat also of the condition of man after this life, of the resurrection of the body, and the final state of rewards and punishments. They give us, moreover, a description of the Church of Christ, and lead us in a very interesting manner to contemplate the holy lives of his Apostles, by whose labours the Gospel was spread abroad in the world, and the way of salvation made known to the children of men.

In explaining the Collects, it has been endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid repetitions ; but this could not altogether be done, as several of them treat of the same subject ; and, therefore, where this is the case, a reference has been frequently made from one Collect to another, and

those parts of it principally enlarged upon which have not been treated of before.

With these few preliminary observations, the work is again with great deference submitted to the public ; and if it shall please God in any measure to make it useful, either to the instruction of the rising generation, or the edification of those of riper years ; or if it be a means of leading any persons to see somewhat of the spirituality and admirable constitution of our excellent Liturgy, the Author trusts that his labours will not have been altogether in vain.

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EXPOSITION
OF
THE COLLECTS.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility: that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

Q. What do you mean by the word "Advent?"

A. It signifies "coming;" and is here used to mean the time when Christ took upon him our nature, and came into the world; and also that great day when he shall come the second day to judge all mankind.

Q. Why has the church appointed these four Sundays, called Advent Sundays, to go before the festival of Christmas?

A. That our minds may be prepared for the devout celebration of that holy season when our Saviour

Christ was born into the world, by considering that he will come again, and summon us all to appear before his judgment seat, and then pass a final sentence upon us, either of eternal happiness or misery, according to the deeds done in our bodies, whether they be good or evil.

Q. What are you taught in the Collect to pray for, from these considerations?

A. That "Almighty God will give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light."

Q. Why do you call God, "Almighty?"

A. Because he possesses sovereign and unlimited power: He can do all things, when, and where, and in what manner he pleases; he is able to save or to destroy: and we are especially to remember, when we pray to him, that he is able to hear and answer our petitions, and to give us whatsoever we stand in need of, both for our souls and bodies.

Q. What do you understand by the "works of darkness?"

A. All ignorance and blindness of heart, whereby men have no true knowledge of God, nor of the way of salvation; and all sin and wickedness whatsoever: in short, every thing that is contrary to God's holy will revealed in the Scriptures.

Q. Why are they called works of darkness?

A. Because they spring from the devil, who is the prince of darkness; because they draw away the heart from God, and are contrary to the light of his Gospel; and because (if persisted in) they will bring men to that place, where they will be "cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxii. 13.

Q. What is meant by the "armour of light?"

A. It means the very reverse of the former, and is thus described by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that

ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked: and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. vi. 13—17. And again, in the Epistle for the day; "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light: let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. xiii. 12, 13.

Q. Why is this called "the armour of light?"

A. It is called "*armour*," because it is the Christian's defence against his spiritual enemies, as armour was the soldier's defence in the day of battle: and it is called the armour of "*light*," being from God, "the Father of lights," and being also holy and heavenly in its nature.

Q. What do we ask Almighty God to give us in order *that* we may "cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light?"

A. Grace, which implies, first, that by nature we have on the works of darkness, or we need not pray to cast them off: and, secondly, that we are unable to cast off the one, and put on the other, without God's grace.

Q. What do you mean by the "grace" of God?

A. His gracious favour, which for Christ's sake he freely bestows upon his believing people in giving them power and strength, by the influence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, to forsake sin, and to follow holiness. "Let us (says the Apostle.) have grace whereby

we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Heb. xii. 28.

Q. Have you any reason to expect that God will give you his grace when you pray for it?

A. Yes, certainly; for God has promised to "give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it." Luke xi. 13. and the Apostle says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16.

Q. And what time do we pray that God will give us this blessing?

A. "Now, in the time of this mortal life," in which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "came to visit us in great humility."

Q. Why do we ask for these things *now*?

A. Because our life is very uncertain, and if we die without them, we shall then perish for ever. "Behold *now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Q. How did our Lord Jesus Christ come to visit us?

A. In great humility—he condescended to be born of poor parents, the Virgin Mary, his mother, being in very humble circumstances, and Joseph, his reputed father, only a carpenter;—when he came into the world he had not a room to be laid in, but was born in the stable of an inn, and laid in the manger;—when he grew up, he was a man of sorrows, and had not where to lay his head;—and at last he submitted to die the shameful death of the cross: and all this to teach us how little he valued worldly wealth, prosperity, or honour.

Q. How will he come again at the last day?

A. He will come again in his "glorious majesty." In that day he will appear in all the glory of his godhead, attended by an innumerable company of angels; and such will be the majesty of his coming, that before his face "heaven and earth shall flee away." Rev. xx. 11. The heavens shall be rolled together, like a scroll

of parchment, in the flame; "the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and the earth, and all things therein, shall be burnt up." 2 Pet. iii. 10.

Q. For what purpose will he appear in this awful manner?

A. "To judge both the quick and the dead." The quick are those who shall be alive at Christ's coming, who shall not die, but be changed from mortal to immortal creatures "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. and, together with all those, who having departed this life, and, whose bodies shall then be raised, and re-united to their souls, shall stand before Christ, and be judged by him, according to their works. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10.

Q. What will be the end of this general judgment?

A. The righteous, that is, they who through divine grace have repented of their sins, believed in Christ, and lived a holy life, shall be made everlastingly happy in heaven: but the wicked, the careless and impenitent, shall be tormented with the devil and his angels in hell for ever and ever. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 46.

Q. What do we pray that we may rise to?

A. "The life immortal," or that everlasting state of happiness and glory which God has prepared for them that love him.

Q. Through whom do we pray that "we may rise to the life immortal?"

A. "Through Him (that is, Jesus Christ) who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, now and ever." This petition implies, that the only way in which we can have eternal life, and stand with acceptance at the bar of God, is through the death and suf-

ferings, the merits and intercession, of the Lord Jesus, who has purchased eternal life for all his people, and "now liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost," for ever and ever. Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE COLLECT.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning ; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Q. What do you call God in this Collect ?

A. " Blessed," for he is infinitely so in his own nature, and the Author of all blessings to his creatures, both temporal and spiritual. " Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore." Psalm cxiii. 2.

Q. What particular blessings are alluded to in this Collect ?

A. These two : the gift of the holy Scriptures, and the gift of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Q. What are the " holy Scriptures," and why are they so called ?

A. The holy Scriptures are the Old and New Testament, which are usually called the Bible ; and they are so called to distinguish them from all other books whatever ; and, further, because they were written by holy men, under the immediate inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, and their tendency is to make us univer-

sally holy. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii. 15. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21.

Q. For what end did God cause the holy Scriptures to be written?

A. "For our learning."—The holy Scriptures are not to be denied to any, but freely given to all; and when we have them we are not to lay them by, and neglect them, but to learn them, desiring to profit by them, "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Rom. xv. 4. That we should hear them; diligently using the means of grace by attending the ordinances of God's house, where we may hear his word both read and preached:—that we should also read the Scriptures constantly in private, looking up for a blessing, that we may not hear or read them carelessly or inattentively, but so as to "mark, learn, and inwardly digest them."

Q. What use does the Collect teach us to make of the Holy Scriptures?

A. That we should "hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them."

Q. What is meant by these expressions, "mark, learn, and inwardly digest them?"

A. To "mark," is to take especial notice of, and attend to, God's holy word; to "learn," is to know and understand it; and "inwardly to digest" it, is to meditate seriously upon it, not letting it slip out of our minds, but praying earnestly unto God for his blessing, without which it will no more benefit our souls, than undigested food will nourish or support our bodies.

Q. What are the fruits of seriously hearing, reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting the Holy Scriptures?

A. "Patience and comfort of God's holy word."—W.

must not merely hear and read God's word for a time, and then leave it off, but patiently continue to wait upon God in these holy duties; and then we may expect to have the comfort of his word, and find it to be not only our duty, but our pleasure and delight.

Q. What do you pray unto God that you may do "by patience and comfort of his holy word?"

A. "Embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which God hath given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ." "That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Rom. xv. 4.

Q. What is this "blessed hope of everlasting life;" and how may we embrace it, and ever hold it fast?

A. This blessed hope of everlasting life is our Saviour Christ himself, who is called "the hope of glory," Col. i. 27; and "eternal life," 1 John v. 20; because it is only through him that we can either hope for, or be made partakers of, everlasting life: and we embrace it, and hold it fast, when, feeling ourselves to be lost and miserable sinners, we renounce all hope of salvation in ourselves, and rely entirely on the mercy of God, through the merits of our Saviour; continuing in the same unto our lives' end: and this hope shows itself to be genuine when it is accompanied with an unfeigned desire after holiness of heart and life. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3.

Q. If such be the end and design of the holy Scriptures, is it not a dangerous thing to neglect the hearing and reading of them.

A. It is indeed, and such persons have reason to fear lest they perish at last without ever coming to the knowledge of the truth; but most dangerous is the case of those who scoff at and ridicule the word of God; for they despise, and neglect, those very means which God has appointed to bring us to everlasting life, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy Messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way,* by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming, to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. To whom is this Collect addressed?

A. To our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. What do you learn from its being addressed to him?

A. That our Lord Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and therefore the proper object of divine worship.

Q. Whom did Christ send, at his first coming, to prepare his way before him?

A. His Messenger, that is, John the Baptist, as we find from our Saviour's own words in the Gospel for this day, where, speaking of John, he says, "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." Matt. xi. 10. Malachi. iii. 1.

Q. How did John the Baptist prepare the way of Christ?

A. By preaching repentance to the people, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" Matt. iii. 2; and then directing them to Christ for the

pardon of their sins: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

Q. What are the ministers of Christ called in this Collect?

A. They are called "the ministers and stewards of his mysteries." Our Lord told the Apostles who were his first ministers, that "unto them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xiii. 11. He ordained them to minister the word of life to others, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Pet. iv. 10. And St. Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." 1 Cor. iv. 1.

Q. Are all preachers to be esteemed as "ministers and stewards of God's mysteries?"

A. No; for some are false prophets, deceitful workers, and false teachers, who "privily bring in damnable heresies, and deny the Lord who bought them." 2 Peter ii. 1.

Q. How shall we know the true from the false?

A. First, by their doctrine; "To the law and to the testimony," saith the Prophet; "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isaiah viii. 20.—And, secondly, by their lives; "By their fruits," our Saviour declares, "ye shall know them." Matt. vii. 15.

Q. How do we pray that the ministers of Christ may prepare and make ready his way?

A. "By turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." These words were first spoken of John, our Lord's forerunner. "And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke i. 17. Malachi iv. 5, 6.

Q. In what manner must they do this?

A. As John the Baptist did; by preaching to them repentance, showing them the guilt and danger of liv-

ing in disobedience to God, endeavouring to convince them of sin, exhorting them to forsake it, and pointing them to Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation.

Q. Will this, then, turn their hearts to the wisdom of the just?

A. Not of itself, for God only can turn the heart ; but he hath promised to accompany the preaching of his word, by the power of his Holy Spirit ; and to make it effectual to the conversion of sinners, by bringing them unto Christ, that they may be justified and sanctified, and so made truly wise unto everlasting salvation.

Q. For what purpose do we pray that Christ's ministers may thus prepare and make ready his way ?

A. That at his "second coming, to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in his sight." The great end of Christ's coming into the world ; and of his sending his ministers to preach the gospel was to prepare us for his coming again ; that we may then "be found an acceptable people in his sight." And as the ministry of his word is the usual means to accomplish this end, we may learn from hence the great blessing of having the Gospel preached to us, and how highly we ought to esteem and pray for faithful ministers, and that their ministry may be blessed to our souls ; for in that great and awful day, when Christ shall come to judge the world, the disobedient will not be accepted by him, nor at all prepared to meet him ; and therefore in order to our being found "an acceptable people in his sight," our hearts must be turned by his grace "to the wisdom of the just;" which we pray the Lord Jesus of his infinite mercy to grant, "who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end." Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, raise up, we pray thee, thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us, through the satisfaction of thy Son, our Lord; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. What do we pray for in this Collect?

A. We pray that the Lord will "raise up his power and come among us, and with great might succour us;" that is, We pray for the Divine power, the Divine presence, Divine strength, and Divine aid, all which are most necessary for us; and we are taught to pray for them with great energy, "O Lord, *raise up*," not merely give or send us, "thy power." "*Raise up we pray thee*," an expression which always gives force to what is asked. "And *come among us*," not merely send us help, but *come thyself*, "and with *great* might succour us."

Q. Why are we taught to pray so earnestly that the Lord will "raise up his power and come among us, and with great might succour us?"

A. Because "through our sins and wickedness we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us."

Q. Why is our Christian course compared to a race, and in what respects will it bear this comparison?

A. Principally in these three: First, in a race there is a certain portion of ground marked out on which the

race is to be run ; so God has marked out our Christian race in his holy word, and we must run according to that rule, “ looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ;” Heb. xii. 2. or we are not on the proper ground, and consequently shall lose our labour. Secondly, in a race there is a certain time appointed for the running of it ; so God has appointed this present life to be the time for running the Christian race, and if we defer it till death comes, we cannot run it at all. And thirdly, in a race there is a reward given to the person who wins the prize ; so God has promised eternal life as the prize we have to run for ; and therefore the Apostle says, “ so run that ye may obtain.” 1 Cor. ix. 24.

Q. How do our sins and wickedness sorely let and hinder us in running this Christian race ?

A. By bringing guilt upon the conscience, strengthening our corrupt nature, and checking our progress in the ways of holiness ; and this may well be called a “ sore let ” and hindrance to us, and is justly compared in Scripture to weights, which clog and encumber our souls, as any thing heavy and cumbersome does the bodies of those who run a race : “ wherefore let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Q. What remedy do we pray for against these hindrances ?

A. “ God’s bountiful grace and mercy,” which are so called, because they spring from the mere bounty and goodness of God, being utterly undeserved and unmerited by us.

Q. What do we desire that God’s “ bountiful grace and mercy ” may do for us ?

A. “ That they may speedily help and deliver us.” We pray for God’s grace, that by it our souls may be strengthened against all sin and wickedness ; and be

delivered from the love, power, and dominion of sin in our hearts, and from the practice of it in our lives: and for God's mercy, that we may be delivered from the guilt and punishment of our iniquities, which we most justly deserve; according to that of the Apostle, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16. And further, we pray that God will send us this help and deliverance *speedily*; that is, that he will grant us immediate relief, according as our necessities require.

Q. On what account do we pray for this help and deliverance?

A. "Through the satisfaction of" the "Son" of God, Jesus Christ, "our Lord."

Q. What is meant by his "satisfaction?"

A. It means the atonement which he made for our sins, when he suffered death upon the cross; and includes his merits and righteousness, which he wrought out for all that believe in his name. This is called his "satisfaction;" because thereby he completely and perfectly satisfied God's justice for our sins, and procured both grace and mercy for us.

Q. How does the Collect conclude?

A. By ascribing "honour and glory" unto Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, "world without end. Amen."

CHRISTMAS DAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thine only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin, Grant that we, being regenerate, and made thy child-

ren by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. What is the meaning of this day called "Christmas Day?"

A. It is the day which we keep in memory of the Nativity or birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Q. What is our Lord Jesus Christ called in this Collect?

A. He is called God's "only begotten Son," and so he is frequently called in Holy Scripture. "No man hath seen God at any time; the *only begotten Son* which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him." John i. 18. "God so loved the world that he gave his *only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the *only begotten Son of God.*" Ver. 18.

Q. Is Christ, then, inferior to the Father?

A. No, not at all: as we may learn from the Epistle for the day, where the same honours are paid to the Son as to the Father himself; for, "When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him:"—And, again, "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." And, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Heb. i. 6, 8, 10, 11, ■.

Q. What did Almighty God give us his only begotten Son to do?

A. "To take our nature upon him;" that is, to be made a real and perfect man, with a human body, and a reasonable soul; in all points like unto our own, sin only excepted. This is expressed in the Gospel, by his being made flesh. "And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John i. 14.

Q. Of whom was God's only begotten Son, as at this time, born?

A. "Of a pure Virgin." This was foretold by the Prophet, "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son; and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah vii. 14. And it was exactly fulfilled in the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary his mother, not by natural generation, as all other men are born, but in a miraculous and extraordinary way, by the power of the Holy Ghost, who formed the Lord Jesus of her substance, so that she was as much a pure Virgin after the birth of Christ, as before. Matt. i. 22, 23. Luke i. 35.

Q. Was it necessary that Christ should thus take upon him our nature, and be born in this wonderful manner?

A. It was, that as man had sinned, so Christ in our nature might make atonement unto God for sin, otherwise his merits would not have been available to his believing people, any more than to the fallen angels, because he took not their nature. It was necessary also, in order that he might take our nature without sin: for if he had been born as all other men are, he would have inherited the same corrupt and sinful nature with them, and so, instead of being able to make atonement for others, would have stood in need of it for himself; but, now, being born in a manner different from all other men, though he took our nature he did not take the

corruption of it, but was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26; and therefore every way qualified, both as God and man, to be our High Priest, and to make atonement and reconciliation for our sins unto God.

Q. What do we pray for in the Collect from the consideration of our Saviour's birth?

A. That "we, being regenerate, and made God's children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit."

Q. What is regeneration?

A. Being born again: it is, as our Catechism says, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." By this new birth our minds are enlightened in Divine truth; particularly to understand our own condition as sinners before God, transgressors of his law, and exposed to his curse and indignation: our hearts are touched with true repentance towards God, which is expressed by godly sorrow and contrition for our sins; and we are led to renounce all hopes of salvation in ourselves, and to trust in Christ alone for pardon and justification: and, finally, we are thereby inclined to holiness of heart and life, and constant obedience to all God's commandments: it is, in fact, the same which the prophet Ezekiel calls "a new heart and a new spirit," Ezek. xxxvi. 26; and described by the Apostle, as "putting off the old man, which is corrupt; and putting on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 21.

Q. How are we born again?

A. By the word and Spirit of God: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Peter i. 23: and, again, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John iii. 6.

Q. Do we not, then, receive this grace in Baptism?

A. Baptism is a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ

himself, in the place of circumcision, as the rite of admission into his church; and they are highly to be condemned who neglect it, or speak lightly of it: the privileges of it are great; and if parents and sponsors were to bring their children to this ordinance with a solemn exercise of faith and repentance, accompanied with earnest prayer for them, instead of making it an occasion of carnal mirth and festivity, we might reasonably hope to see better effects result from it: but when we see persons, as they grow up, living in sin, carelessness, and folly, unmindful of God, and unconcerned about their souls (as the generality of mankind are) we may as truly say of them that they are unregenerate, notwithstanding their baptism, as the Lord said, by his Prophet, that "all the house of Israel were uncircumcised in the heart," Jer. ix. 26. or as St. Stephen called the Jews, "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears," Acts vii, 51. although they had all been circumcised in their flesh. And as St. Paul says "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew that is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii. 29: so we may with equal truth declare, he is not a Christian who is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is merely outward in the flesh.

Q. Is regeneration necessary to salvation?

A. It is so necessary, that our Saviour declares no man can be saved without it: "Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3.

Q. What are truly regenerate persons made besides?

A. They are made the children of God "by adoption and grace."

Q. How are they made the children of God by adoption?

A. They are taken into his family : they have God for their father, Christ for their elder brother, the Holy Spirit for their guide and comforter, and heaven for their home ; and they are entitled to all the privileges of children. For “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Q. How are they made the children of God by grace?

A. Grace, in general, means unmerited favour, but frequently Divine strength or assistance ; and regenerate persons are made the children of God in both these senses : for it is by the undeserved favour of God that they are made his children ; as saith the Apostle, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour,” Tit. iii. 5 : and it is also by Divine strength and assistance, for without this they could never have been regenerate, and so made God’s children.

Q. For what do we pray as being regenerate and made God’s children by adoption and grace?

A. “That we may daily be renewed” by God’s “Holy Spirit.” For as this new and spiritual life is communicated at first by the Holy Spirit, so we pray that it may be continually supported and nourished by the same Spirit ; that the old man, which is our corrupt and sinful nature, may daily be more mortified and subdued, and that all the fruits of the Spirit may daily abound in our hearts and lives ; that we may be “renewed in the spirit of our minds, and prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.” Rom. xii. 2.

Q. Through whom do we pray for the renewing of the Holy Spirit?

A. “Through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ ;”

even that same Jesus "who was born as at this time of a pure Virgin;" and who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the same Spirit, "ever one God, world without end." Amen."

NOTE. *The same Collect is used for the Sunday after Christmas Day.*

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth, for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors, by the example of thy first Martyr, Saint Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God, to succour all those that suffer for thee, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

Q. Who was Saint Stephen?

A. He was one of the seven mentioned, Acts vi. 3. whom the Apostles chose to assist them in their ministry?

Q. Does the Scripture say any thing of his character?

A. Yes: it says that he was "a man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith:" and he preached with such success, that his adversaries "were not able to resist the wisdom and power with which he spake." Acts vi. 5, 10.

Q. What is St. Stephen called in this Collect?

A. He is called Christ's "first Martyr." For after

the death of Christ, St. Stephen was the first who suffered death "for the testimony of God's truth." A Martyr is one who bears testimony to God's truth, and seals this testimony with his blood by suffering death rather than deny the faith of the Gospel. Thus did the blessed Martyr St. Stephen; and when he was apprehended by the Jews for his known attachment to the cause of Christ, and brought before their council, he bore testimony to the truth of God, with the greatest fidelity, showing the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, even that Prophet whom Moses foretold should come; and charging them with the murder of Christ, resisting his Holy Spirit, and persecuting his people, as their fathers did the Prophets: upon which they were "cut to the heart," and rising up against him with one consent, drew him out of their assembly, and killed him, by stoning him with stones till he died. Acts vii. 58. As therefore, St. Stephen was the first that suffered for the cause of Christ after his death, it was fit that his martyrdom should be commemorated immediately after our Saviour's nativity.

Q. To whom do we pray in this Collect?

A. To the Lord, the blessed Jesus; and the Collect is particularly addressed to Him, because it mentions the faith of St. Stephen in praying unto Jesus, and alludes to that view which he had by faith of the glory that shall be revealed; for he, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts vii. 55, 56.

Q. How do we pray to follow his example in this act of his faith?

A. We pray, that, "in all our sufferings upon earth for the testimony of the truth" (of our Lord Jesus) we may (also) look stedfastly up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed."

Q. What sufferings may we expect to meet with upon earth, for the testimony of Christ's truth?

A. We are not exposed now to the same trials that the Apostles were of old, or the Martyrs, many years ago, in our own country; because, through the goodness of God, these bloody persecutions have been long since ended: but yet, if we bear testimony to the truth of Christ, so as to acknowledge him for our Saviour, openly profess his religion in the face of the world, take his word for our rule, and live that holy life which he requires of us, we must expect persecution of another sort, such as being laughed at for our religion, despised, insulted, opposed, and spoken evil of by an ungodly world: and if we do not meet with something of this kind, we have reason to suspect we are not, as we ought to do, bearing testimony to the truth of Christ.

Q. How can we "stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed?"

A. We must not expect to behold any extraordinary vision of Christ with our bodily eyes, to see the heavens opened over our heads, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; for this was a peculiar revelation granted to St. Stephen, to animate and encourage him in the great trial he had to go through, and it would be enthusiasm, and not faith, for us to expect the same in our ordinary trials: but "stedfastly to look up to heaven, and by faith to behold the glory that shall be revealed," is to have our minds fixed upon heavenly things, to consider that this world is not our home, and by faith to live in a believing expectation of that glory which shall be revealed hereafter. For "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. xi. 1. and it has its proper effect upon our minds, when we look upon all things here below as vanity, and make it our great concern to please God, to be obedient to his will, and ready to suffer, when he calls us so to do, for Christ's sake.

Q. How did St. Stephen exercise his charity towards his murderers?

A. By praying for them.

Q. To whom did he pray for them?

A. To the Lord Jesus Christ, which was another proof of his faith, and showed that he believed him to be God, equal with the Father; for he called upon him as God, committed his soul into his hands, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and then prayed to him for his murderers, kneeling down and crying with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! and when he had said this he fell asleep." Acts vii. 59, 60; that is, he died in peace.

Q. How do we pray to follow his example in this respect?

A. We pray, "that being filled with the Holy Ghost, we may learn to love and bless our persecutors."

Q. What is meant by being "filled with the Holy Ghost?"

A. It means, for our hearts to be under the influence of that Holy Spirit, so as to be directed, assisted, strengthened, comforted, and sanctified by Him; for without his Almighty aid, we are totally unable to practise faith or charity, or any other Christian grace whatever. And if we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we shall learn to love and bless our persecutors. When we are unjustly persecuted or opposed by wicked men for the sake of the Gospel, we shall not return "evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing:" if they speak evil of us, we must not speak evil of them again; if they curse us, we must bless them; and if they despitefully use us, we must pray for them, that God would be pleased to show them their error, pardon their sins, and turn their hearts; as our Saviour hath both taught us and set us the example; and as his servant, St. Stephen, prayed to him for his murderers.

Q. For what purpose does the blessed Jesus stand at the right hand of God?

A. "To succour all those that suffer for him." This consideration should teach us what an Almighty Saviour we have to support us under our trials; one who hath all power to help and deliver us, seeing he "standeth at the right hand of God:" we should therefore put our trust in him, assuring ourselves that he will not fail to help us, so that we shall be "more than conquerors, through him who hath loved us." Rom. viii. 37.

Q. What is our blessed Saviour called at the conclusion of this Collect?

A. "Our only Mediator and Advocate." A Mediator is one that reconciles two parties that have been at variance; so Christ hath reconciled God to man, and man to God: and an Advocate is one that takes up the cause of another, and pleads in his behalf; so Christ pleads in behalf of all who come unto God by him: and He is our *only* Mediator and our *only* Advocate; we pray to him only, not to the Virgin Mary, nor to the saints and angels, that they may intercede with God for us, because that would be to dishonour Christ, for the Scripture teaches us, that "there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5; and again, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1, 2. Into his hands therefore, as our only Mediator and Advocate, we put our cause, that he may plead it effectually for us before the throne of God.

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

MERCIFUL Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy church, that it

being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. John, may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. Who was Saint John the Evangelist ?

A. He was the son of Zebedee, and brother of James, and by occupation a fisherman. Our Lord surnamed both him and his brother James, *Boanerges*, that is, Sons of Thunder. He was, on many occasions, particularly favoured by our blessed Saviour: at his transfiguration, Saint John was one of the three that beheld his glory; he also, with the other two disciples, accompanied Christ into the garden, where he was betrayed; he leaned on his breast at his Last Supper; and was particularly distinguished as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John xiii. 23.

Q. Why is Saint John called an "Evangelist?"

A. An Evangelist is a preacher or writer of the Gospel; and Saint John is so called because he was one of the four who wrote the history of our Saviour's life and actions, which we usually call the Gospel.

Q. Did St. John write any thing besides his Gospel?

A. Yes: he wrote three Epistles; the first general, that is, addressed to all Christians: the second to a certain lady; and the third, to a pious Christian of the name of Gaius: he wrote also the Revelation, in the Isle of Patmos, whither he was banished, on which account he is called "the Divine:" and in these writings he enlightened the church with his doctrine.

Q. What is St. John called in this Collect besides an Evangelist?

A. He is also called an Apostle, that is, one who was sent by Christ to preach the Gospel; which name was given by our Saviour to the twelve disciples, "whom also he named Apostles;" Luke vi. 13. and whom he

commanded to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15.

Q. What do you understand by the expression "Merciful Lord," which begins the Collect?

A. When God is said to be merciful, it means that he is ready to pardon sin, and remit the punishment of it for Christ's sake to penitent sinners. The Collect begins "Merciful Lord," to put us in mind, perhaps, that the enlightening of the Church by the writings of Saint John, (as well as by the other parts of Scripture) is to be ascribed entirely to the mercy of God; without which it would have been left in gross ignorance and darkness.

Q. What do we beseech the merciful Lord to do for his Church?

A. We beseech him to cast his bright beams of light upon his church. It is a prayer, that God would not only enlighten his church by his written word, but also by his Holy Spirit, so as to enable us to understand and profit by it; for without this we shall still be left in darkness, notwithstanding the benefit of the written word; "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Q. Why do we pray God to "cast his bright beams of light upon his church?"

A. "That it, being enlightened by the doctrine of his blessed Apostle and Evangelist, St. John, may so walk in the light of his truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Q. What is meant by "walking in the light of God's truth?"

A. It means, that we hold no pernicious errors, nor deceitful doctrines; but that all our views of Divine truth are agreeable to the light of God's holy word: and also, that our practice, as well as our belief, is agree-

able to the same: that we deny all "ungodliness and worldly lusts," and live a holy life, suitable to our Christian profession; for as this holy Apostle and Evangelist, St. John, declares, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all: if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 5, 6, 7.

Q. For what purpose do we pray thus to "walk in the light of God's truth?"

A. "That at length we may attain to the light of everlasting life." Sin is the broad road that leads to death, and to "outer darkness;" but they who by divine grace have the bright beams of God's light shining upon them in the use of his holy word, and are thereby enabled to walk in the light of his truth, shall at length "attain to the light of everlasting life;" and come to that blessed place which is full of light and glory: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xxii. 5.

Q. Through whom may the church of God attain everlasting life?

A. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." For His sake we pray that we may walk in the light of God's truth here upon earth; and through his merits we can alone be made partakers of eternal life and happiness, in heaven.

THE INNOCENT'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify thee by their deaths ; Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that, by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy name ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. Who were the Innocents here spoken of ?

A. They were young children, whom Herod, the wicked king of Judea, most cruelly commanded to be put to death.

Q. On what account did he commit this act of barbarity ?

A. We learn from St. Matthew (chap. ii.) that, when Christ was born, there came Wise Men from the East to worship him, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews ?" When Herod heard this, he was troubled, thinking, perhaps, that if this child was the promised Messiah, and acknowledged as King of the Jews, his own kingdom would be destroyed : he therefore dissembled with the Wise Men, telling them to go and find out the child Jesus, and then bring him word, that he might come and worship him also, intending in his heart to kill him : but God disappointed the scheme of this tyrant, by warning the Wise Men, in a dream, not to return to Herod ; so they went into their own country another way. Then, when Herod saw that the Wise Men did not come to him, as they had promised, he was so angry, that he ordered all the children in Bethlehem and the surrounding country, of two years old and

under, 'to be slain, in hopes of killing the infant Saviour among them ; but God directed Joseph and his mother to flee with him into Egypt ; and by this means he escaped the general slaughter, and the wicked designs of Herod with regard to him were entirely defeated.

Q. In what sense did Almighty God "ordain strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," and make these infants to glorify Him by their deaths ?

A. The first part of this passage is taken from Psalm viii. 2. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength ;" and will apply to these children, because they suffered innocently for Christ's sake, being put to death on His account ; and when, perhaps, we might have expected that some faithful and zealous disciple would have been the first to have suffered for the cause of Christ, God was pleased to ordain strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, by giving them the honour of being his first martyrs : and in the same sense, he made these children to glorify him by their deaths ; by which an ancient prophecy was accompanied ; for "then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning ; Rachel weeping for her children. and would not be comforted, because they are not." Matt. ii. 17, 18.

Q. What do we pray for in this Collect ?

A. First, we pray unto God to "Mortify and kill all vices in us ?" By nature the seeds of evil are sown in our hearts, "For (as our Saviour, who knew what was in man declares) out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man." Matt. xv. 19, 20. And even in regenerate persons, who are renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the

other ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. And again, St. Paul speaks of sin dwelling in him. Rom. vii. 17. We pray therefore unto God both to mortify and kill all vices in us. The mortification of sin is begun and carried on in true believers by the grace of God daily : and it is the promise of God that "sin shall not have dominion over them ; for they are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. But the death, or final extinction of indwelling sin will not be till the believer is made perfect in glory, and "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom. viii. 21. The mortification and death of sin is the unfeigned desire of every true Christian ; "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 11.

Q. How do we pray in the next petition, that God will strengthen us ?

A. By his grace. We know that of ourselves we can do no good thing, but that our sufficiency is of God, 2 Cor. v. 5. and therefore we look up to him to strengthen us by his grace.

Q. For what purpose do we pray that we may be strengthened by the grace of God ?

A. "That by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith, even unto death, we may glorify God's holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Q. What is meant by "innocency" of life ?

A. It does not mean perfect, unsinning obedience ; for that no man can perform in the present state ; and "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ;" 1 John i. 8 : but still we are to aim at it ; to live in no allowed guile, to do nothing by partiality, not obeying one precept and neglecting another ; but to have respect unto all God's commandments, and pray for greater measures of grace and strength, that we may live more and more to the glory of God ; and wherein we come short of our duty, that

we be truly humbled before God on account of it, and pray for his gracious acceptance of what we do, and his merciful pardon of what we do amiss, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

• Q. What is meant by the "constancy of our faith?"

A. Faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. ix. 1. By faith we believe whatsoever God has revealed in his blessed word; and if our faith be genuine, we shall act accordingly. Thus, for instance, if we believe in God as our Father, we shall by faith study to live as obedient children; if we believe in Christ as our Redeemer, we shall come unto him by faith for pardon and salvation; if we believe in the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, by faith we shall pray for his gracious influence upon our hearts and lives. And we further pray that our faith may be constant, even unto death; that we be not like those who endure but for a time, and in the hour of temptation fall away; but that we "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;" Heb. x. 23. and even if we should be called upon to suffer death, as some have done, rather to do that, than give up our faith, and thus continue "faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life." Rev. ii. 10.

Q. How will the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith, "glorify God's holy name?"

A. God is said to be glorified, when his glory is made known amongst men: we glorify God, then, by a holy life, in showing unto all men that we have a regard to his commandments, and fulfil our Saviour's precept, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v. 16. And we glorify God also by the constancy of our faith, by showing that we believe his holy word, and are persuaded the things contained in it are most certainly true; whereas those who deny the faith, offer the greatest affront to God that can be, for they "make him a liar;" 1 John v. 10.

and they who live a wicked, sinful life, dishonour God's holy name, and bring a scandal and reproach on his religion. We have great reason, therefore, to pray for grace, that we may have the glory of God always in view, through Jesus Christ our Lord; through his merits, and for his sake. Amen.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit, that, our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will; through the same, thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What was circumcision?

A. Circumcision was one of the sacraments in the Jewish church, which God at first gave to Abraham, as the seal of that covenant which he was pleased to make with him, and which He commanded all his posterity to observe. Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith.

Q. Who was "God's blessed Son," whom he made to be circumcised?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ; as we read St. Luke ii. 21. "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

Q. Why was Christ circumcised?

A. That he might be "obedient to the law for man:" for as Christ came into the world that he might per-

fectly obey the law which man had broken, as well as suffer the punishment which the law threatened against transgressors, it was therefore necessary that he should submit to all its precepts, and to this of circumcision among the rest: and this he did for man; that is, to the intent that man might be justified, or accounted righteous, before God, on the account of the obedience of Christ to the law: for “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Q. Ought the ordinance of circumcision still to be observed by us?

A. No: Christ has abolished it, with the other ceremonies of the Jewish law, and instituted Baptism in its stead, to be the sacrament of admission into the Christian church. But although the outward ceremony is done away, yet our church still teaches us to look to the spiritual meaning of it; by directing us to pray that God will “grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit;”—“for that circumcision is not outward in the flesh, but of the heart; in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Rom. ii. 29.

Q. What is the “true circumcision of the Spirit?”

A. It is well explained by the following words of the Collect; “that, our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey thy blessed will.”

Q. What is meant by “worldly and carnal lusts?”

A. Lust, in general, means desire; but it is commonly used in a bad sense, to signify unlawful desires, and sinful appetites: worldly lusts, mean, unlawful, and unreasonable desires after worldly things, such as riches, honour, pleasure, and the like carnal lusts mean the lusts of the flesh, particularly uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, pride, envy, wrath, strife, and every other

corrupt passion of our fallen nature. We pray, first, that our hearts may be mortified from all these lusts, because, as our Saviour teaches us, Matt. xv. 19, they all "proceed out of the heart, and defile the man;" and then we pray that all our members, that is, that our whole bodies, may be mortified from them too; that so we may, in all things, both in our hearts and bodies, obey God's blessed will.

Q. Why is this called the "true circumcision of the Spirit?"

A. It is called the circumcision of the Spirit, because the author of it is God the Holy Ghost; for it is his work alone to circumcise the heart; and it is called the *true* circumcision of the Spirit, as being that which circumcision represented, and to distinguish it from the outward ordinance which the carnal Jews gloried in as being all that was necessary; but, says St. Paul, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 3.

Q. How are we "in all things to obey God's blessed will?"

A. In order to obey God's blessed will, it is necessary, first, to know it; and for this purpose we must "search the Scriptures," where God has revealed his will, and showed us what he would have us to do: and then we must pray for grace to obey it, not only in some, but in all things, that we may walk before God, as Zacharias and Elizabeth did, "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Luke i. 6; we must obey it in our hearts, "ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you," Rom. vi. 17, and in all the members of our bodies; that so we may "yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Rom. vi. 13.

Q. How shall we be able thus to obey God's blessed will?

A. "Through the same, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord:" the same Jesus whom at the beginning of this Collect we acknowledge to be the blessed Son of God, and who was circumcised and obedient unto the law for man; for the Apostle declares, "I can do all things, through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 13.

THE EPIPHANY;

OR, THE

MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES.

THE COLLECT.

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only begotten Son to the Gentiles; Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is meant by the word "Epiphany?"

A. It means manifestation; and is used on this occasion to signify Christ's being manifested, or made known to the Gentiles.

Q. Who are meant by the "Gentiles?"

A. The Gentiles, in an enlarged sense, signify all nations except the Jews, who being God's ancient people, and set apart from the rest of mankind, looked upon all other nations as heathens and infidels, as indeed they generally were, being destitute of the knowledge of the true God, and for the most part given up to idolatry; but now Christ has abolished the distinction between Jew and Gentile, and commanded his Gospel to be preached among all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19.—"that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of

the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel." Eph. iii. 6. But the persons alluded to in the Collect were as the first fruits of the Gentiles, who were converted to the faith of Christ: they are called "wise men;" they came from the country lying eastward of Judea, and were persons of great rank and learning.

Q. How did God "manifest" his "only begotten Son" unto them?

A. "By the leading of a star;" they saw in their own country a new and extraordinary star, which they supposed denoted the birth of some great king; they therefore came into the land of Judea, and inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews," and were directed by Herod to Bethlehem: and when they departed, "the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy; and when they came into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Matt. ii. 8—11. These honourable persons were not ashamed of Christ, although they saw him as a poor child, but acknowledged him as their King; and also as God, by offering him incense with their other gifts, and falling down and worshipping him. In this manner God manifested his only begotten Son to the Gentiles.

Q. What do we pray for in the Collect from this subject?

A. We pray God "mercifully to grant, that we, which know him now by faith, may, after this life, have the fruition of his glorious Godhead."

Q. What is it to know God by faith? .

A. We know God now by faith, when we believe in him, as he has revealed himself to us in his holy word; as one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost; and as a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; when we thankfully accept his way of pardoning sinners through Jesus Christ; and sanctifying them by his Holy Spirit, and when we have such a practical knowledge of God, as influences the heart and governs the life; for this is spoken of as the true knowledge of God: "Did not thy father," says the prophet to the wicked king of Judah, "eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this *to know me*?" saith the Lord." Jer. xxii. 15, 16. And the sons of Eli, who were wicked men, are said to be sons of Belial; "they *knew not* the Lord." 1 Sam. ii. 12.

Q. What is meant by having the fruition of his glorious Godhead, after this life?

A. It means having the full enjoyment of God's presence in heaven, which constitutes the everlasting happiness of the saints in glory; for God being perfectly happy in his own nature, is the source of all happiness to his creatures, and able to satisfy their largest desires, which nothing else can possibly do; for let men have what they will of earthly possessions, they are still in want of something more: as for the "pleasures of sin," they "are but for a season," Heb. xi. 25. and then embittered by the most miserable reflections; but "in God's presence is the fulness of joy; and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm xvi. 11.

Q. Is it necessary for us to "know God now by faith," in order that "after this life we may have the fruition of his glorious Godhead?"

A. It is; for, when Christ comes to judgment, he will "take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his gospel; but will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. i. 7, 10.

Q. Through whom do we pray to have the enjoyment of God's presence in the next life?

A. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord," for he is both the "author and the finisher of our faith,"—Heb. xii. 1. He giveth us "understanding, to know him that is true; and to be in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John v. 20. "And in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. ii. 9.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is the character here given of God's people?

A. They are described as a praying people: they call upon God. Hence it is evident that those who live without prayer are not the people of God.

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is asking those things of God which we stand in need of, whether for our bodies or souls: for our bodies, we pray that they may be fed, clothed, supported, and preserved; for our souls, we pray for pardon of sin, grace, holiness, humility, faith, the fear and love of God, and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. And that our prayers may be acceptable to God, we must "ask in faith," Jam. i. 5; with our hearts, as well as with our lips, "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." 1 Tim. ii. 8. Our prayers must be not only in the church but also in secret, not to be "seen

of men," Matt. vi. 5, 6. we must not use "vain repetitions," Matt. vi. 7, 8. nor be "rash, or hasty with our mouth," Eccl. v. 2. nor "ask amiss," to gratify our lusts, Jam. iv. 3. but "according to the will" of God, 1 John v. 14. not loving sin in our hearts, Psalm lxvi. 18. not trusting to be heard for "our own righteousness, but for God's great mercies," Dan. ix. 18. in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, John xiv. 13.

Q. What does the Scripture teach us of the manner in which we must pray to God?

A. It teaches us, that we must "ask in faith, nothing wavering;" Jam. i. 5. that we must pray with our hearts, as well as with our lips: Psalm xix. 14.

Q. How shall we be enabled to pray aright?

A. By the assistance of God's Holy Spirit; "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26.

Q. What do we pray for in this Collect?

A. We pray, first, that God will mercifully receive the prayers of his people "which call upon him." This petition implies, that the people of God do not only pray unto him, as is their duty, but that they are concerned and anxious that God would hear and answer their prayers; and while others think that when they have said their prayers they have done all that is required, and do not regard whether they are heard or not, God's people dread, as the greatest evil, that their prayers should be unnoticed: thus David prayed; "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my rock: be not silent unto me, lest, if thou be silent unto me, I become like them that go down into the pit." Psalm xxviii. 1. And they pray also that God will *mercifully* receive their prayers, because they know that they are so imperfect and mixed with sin, that unless God receives them in mercy, their very prayers would be their condemnation; "Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have *mercy* also upon me, and answer me." Psalm xxvii. 8.

Q. What is the second thing which we pray that God will grant unto his people?

A. "That they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do." The knowledge of God's will is the first step to obedience; for unless we know what God would have us to do, it is impossible that we can practise it; but ignorance of the Divine truth is the sure way to sin and disobedience; and therefore David gave this advice to his son Solomon, first "to know God," and then to "serve him with a perfect heart and willing mind," 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. In this prayer we acknowledge that God is the Author of all spiritual wisdom, and are taught to look up unto him to enlighten our minds by his Holy Spirit: "for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Cor ii. 11.

Q. What is the third petition which we ask in this Collect for God's people?

A. That they "may also have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same." The end which we ought to have in view in praying for the knowledge of God's will, is that we may do it: for as, on the one hand, we cannot do what God requires of us, unless we first know it; so, on the other, it will be of no use for us to know it, unless we do it: nay, if we know the will of God, and do it not, it would have been better for us never to have known it: since our Saviour assures us that such persons shall receive a heavier doom, and greater condemnation: "for that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Luke xii. 47. We therefore pray for grace and power from God, (for in ourselves we are both graceless and helpless) that our hearts may be inclined, and our souls strengthened, "faithfully to fulfil the same;" that is heartily, truly, and sincerely to practise those things which we ought to do; and which we pray that

we may both perceive and know : all which we beg of God to grant us, " through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Amen.*

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth : Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. How do we address God in this Collect ?

A. As almighty, everlasting, and as governing all things in heaven and earth.

Q. What is meant by the word " almighty ?"

A. It means all-powerful, that God can do every thing, for there is nothing beyond the reach of his power : " Great is our Lord, and great is his power." Psalm cxlvii. 5. " O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord, like unto thee ? Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand." Psalm lxxxix. 9, 14.

Q. What is meant by God's being " everlasting ?"

A. That he exists from eternity, to eternity. He never had a beginning, nor ever will have an end. " Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Psalm xc. 2.

Q. What does Almighty God govern ?

A. " All things in heaven and earth." He governs all the host of heaven : the sun, the moon, and the stars, all move in obedience to his will : " he appointed the moon for certain seasons, and the sun knoweth his

going down." Psalm civ. 19. "He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names." Psalm cxlvii. 4. So likewise he governs all the intelligent beings in heaven: angels fly to execute his pleasure; "they fulfil his commandments, and hearken unto the voice of his words." Psalm ciii. 20. He governs also all things in earth; "He giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness;" Acts xiv. 17. "and again, he turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." Psalm cvii. 34. He governs all the seasons of the year, disposes all events, and makes all the men upon earth subservient to his sovereign will; not only the righteous, who delight to serve God, but the wicked also, even the most powerful of them; "for he maketh the wrath of man to praise him." Psalm lxxvi. 10. In short, "whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places." Psalm cxxxv. 6.

Q. What are we here taught to pray for, from the hands of this almighty and everlasting God?

A. We pray, first, that he will "mercifully hear the supplications of his people;" which has the same meaning as what we prayed for in the last Collect, that God would "mercifully receive the prayers of his people;" only in this, we offer up our supplications for another blessing.

Q. What is the blessing we here supplicate God for?

A. That he will "grant us his peace all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Q. What is the peace of God?

A. St. Paul describes it as being so great a blessing, that we can neither fully understand nor express, when he calls it "the peace of God which passeth all understanding;" Phil. iv. 7: it is therefore rather to be felt than described: nevertheless, we may observe that it means a state of reconciliation with God, through Jesus

Christ, which will produce peace in our own consciences, and peace one towards another.

Q. What do you mean by reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ ?

A. To understand this—we must remember, that by nature we are not in a state of reconciliation with God ; as sinners we have offended him, and are his “enemies by wicked works,” Col. i. 21 ; we have a carnal mind, which is “enmity against God,” Rom. viii. 7 ; and, therefore, God is justly displeased with us, for he is “angry with the wicked every day,” Psalm vii. 11. Now in this dreadful state we should all have remained, had not God of his infinite mercy found out a way to reconcile sinners to himself through the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ ; for “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” 2 Cor. v. 19. In this way alone we can have peace with God, “for he is our peace ;” Eph. ii. 14 ; “and he made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.” Col. i. 20.

Q. How may we have peace with God ?

A. By faith in Christ Jesus ; for, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” Rom. v. 1. We must not think to make our own peace with God by any thing that we can do : but must come as penitent sinners, confessing our guilt, desiring to have mercy and peace through Jesus Christ alone, and really and truly believing that his blood was shed for the remission of our sins, his righteousness wrought out for our justification, and that through him we have peace with God, “being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Rom. iii. 24. .

Q. What is peace of conscience ?

A. Peace of conscience is the inward sense of our reconciliation to God, and of our interest in what Christ has done and suffered for us. It is very different from that

false security which many persons have, who, having never been awakened to a sense of sin, and not knowing the corruption of their own hearts, think that they have done no harm, and have no cause to fear, because their conscience does not reproach them with any great and scandalous sins. This is not peace of conscience, but ignorance, stupidity, and insensibility of heart : for as there is no peace with God, so there can be no true peace of mind, but through faith in Christ : and therefore St. Paul says, “ we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Rom. v. 11.

Q. What is peace one with another ?

A. This is another and a certain effect of having peace with God : if the peace of God does indeed rule in our hearts, we shall put “ away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice ; and be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us ;” Eph. iv. 31, 32. and where these blessed effects are wanting, we have no reason at all to conclude that such persons are in a state of reconciliation with God. This peace of God we pray for “ all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Q. What is meant by "our infirmities?"

A. It means the weakness of our nature, both as it respects our bodies and souls.

Q. What are the infirmities of our bodies?

A. Hunger, and thirst, weariness, pain, sickness, and a great variety of diseases, and at length death, when our bodies return again to the dust, of which they were originally made.

Q. What are the infirmities of our souls?

A. They are very many, and very great: our "understanding is darkened," Eph. iv. 18. our wills corrupt and perverse, and our hearts full of all evil: for "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mark vii. 21—23. This is the natural condition of all men: and even true Christians, who "delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet have another law in their members warring against the law of their minds." Rom. vii. 22, 23. And not only have they this disposition to evil, but they have no ability to that which is good; for St. Paul says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Rom. vii. 18. And even their very prayers are full of infirmity, for "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Rom. viii. 26.

Q. How came we to have these infirmities of body and soul?

A. We derive them from our first father, Adam; for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. v. 12.

Q. What do we ask of God in this Collect, with respect to our infirmities?

A. We pray that he will “mercifully look upon them,” that he will “not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities;” but that he will look with an eye of pity and compassion on our weak, helpless, and miserable condition. And we have great encouragement to offer up this prayer unto God from what the Scriptures say of his compassion towards his people; “for look how high the heaven is above the earth, so great is his mercy also unto them that fear him: look how wide the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he considereth that we are but dust.” Psalm ciii. 11—14. And the Lord Jesus Christ is represented as a most compassionate Saviour; for he is “not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. iv. 15.

Q. What do we pray for besides?

A. That “in all our dangers and necessities God will stretch forth his right hand to help and defend us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” By this expression, that God will stretch forth his right hand, we are not to suppose that God has hands, like one of us; but we pray that he will exert his almighty power to help and defend us in all our dangers and necessities. This petition for effectual help is very suitable after that for God’s merciful compassion: for pity to be of any service to the afflicted must be followed by sufficient aid. God never fails to help his people when they look to him: he not only mercifully looks upon their infirmities, but stretches out his right hand to defend them; for he “saveth by his right hand them that trust in him.” Psalm xvii. 7.

Q. Through whom do we pray to God for his compassion and help?

A. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord:" a reference may be here made to the Gospel for the day, where Christ is represented as having compassion on, and helping, two persons who came to him for relief: one of whom being afflicted with the leprosy, a most loathsome and incurable disease, came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean: and Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Matt. viii. 3, 4. The other was a Centurion, or captain of a hundred soldiers, who came and besought him that he would heal his servant, who was sick of the palsy; and Jesus immediately said, "I will come and heal him;" but the Centurion had such great humility, that he thought himself unworthy for Christ even to come into his house; and such great faith, that he was assured, if he only spake the word, his servant should be healed: Christ did speak the word, and his servant was healed the very same hour. In this manner our blessed Saviour manifested his divine power and compassion; and he is still the same to all who apply to him: through him, therefore, we pray that God will "mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth his right hand to help and defend us."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protec-

tion, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What are the "dangers," in the midst of which God knows us to be set or placed?

A. They are described, first, as being *many* dangers. We have many dangers from the world in which we dwell : we are in danger from its riches ; so that our Saviour said, " how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ! " Mark x. 23 : and we are in danger from poverty too ; so that Agur said, " lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Prov. xxx. 9. We are in danger from its honours, lest, like the Pharisees, we should love " the praise of men more than the praise of God," John xii. 43 : and we are in danger from its pleasures, not only from those that are sinful, but from those that are lawful, lest they should draw away our hearts from God. Nay, we are in danger even from our common employments and lawful occupations, lest we should be hindered by them from coming to Christ ; as in the Parable, " They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize." Matt. xxii. 5 : We are also in danger from the men of the world, lest we should be drawn into sin by them. Another source of danger is the corruption and depravity of our own hearts, whereby we are inwardly disposed to yield to temptation : such as uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, anger, malice, revenge, and every other sinful passion. We are also in danger from the crafts and assaults of the devil, " who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. v. 8. These dangers are not only *many*, but great. The allurements of the world are very attracting, the lusts of the flesh are strongly interwoven in our nature, and the devil is a very great and powerful adversary,—

cunning, malicious, and watchful of every opportunity to lay snares for our ruin. These are some of the dangers to which we are exposed, and it will easily be seen that they are very many and very great.

Q. What is the reason that we "cannot always stand upright?"

A. It is on account of the "frailty of our nature;" and this is to be understood of true believers, for the ungodly never stand upright; but even true Christians, who constantly endeavour to walk uprightly before God, by reason of the frailty or weakness of their nature, oftentimes fail in their duty; as was the case with the disciples mentioned in the Gospel for this day, Matt. viii. 23—26. who having entered into a ship with their blessed Master, "there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves, but He was asleep." The disciples forgot all the wonderful works that he had done, and instead of believing that Christ was able to calm the sea, and preserve them from danger, gave way to sinful fear, and thought they should all be lost, and therefore "came and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish." But he said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" and then showed how great his power was, and how little reason they had to be afraid, by "rebuking the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." Thus, by the frailty of their nature, the disciples could not stand upright; and it is from the same cause that God's people often fall into similar errors.

Q. What is implied in this confession, that God *knows* "us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that, by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright?"

A. This is a source of great comfort to the people of God. They know that they are surrounded with many and great dangers, and that their nature is so weak and frail that they cannot always stand upright; no, nor yet stand at all, unless upheld by Divine grace: but

then they know also, that God is acquainted with all their circumstances; that he knows the dangers to which they are exposed, and their own inability to resist them infinitely better than they do themselves; and therefore they are encouraged to lay open their complaints before him, and to apply to him for that "strength and protection" of which they stand in need.

Q. What strength and protection do we beseech God in this Collect to grant us?

A. "Such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations."

Q. How does God strengthen and protect his people?

A. He strengthens them by his grace, and protects them by his power; and therefore the Apostle says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. vi. 10. It is only by the strength and protection of God, that we can be supported in danger and carried through temptation: and nothing short of his almighty grace, and all powerful arm will be sufficient to protect and defend us.

Q. Through whom do we pray for strength and protection?

A. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." For it is only by having Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith, and experiencing his love shed abroad within us, that we can be made strong; being "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 16—19.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy church and household continually in thy true religion; that they, who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is meant by these expressions, God's "church and household?"

A. The church of God means the people of God; the whole body of believers of which Christ is the head, Eph. i. 22, 23. "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Article xix. In the Gospel for this day the present state of the church is compared to a field in which are sown both tares and wheat, which shall "grow together till the harvest;" that is, the visible church consists both of good and bad, of the righteous and the wicked; and shall so continue till the end of the world, when an everlasting separation shall take place between them: the wicked, like the tares, shall be gathered in bundles to be burned; and the righteous, like the wheat, God will gather into his barn. Matt. xiii. 24—30.

Q. Are not believers only the true and spiritual members of Christ's Church?

A. Yes; the Church of Christ spiritually understood consists of those who are Christians indeed and in truth, and not only in name and by profession. They

are known only to God, who searcheth the hearts, and cannot exactly be distinguished by men, who may possibly be deceived by a fair outward appearance. In the parable before-mentioned, they are compared to wheat; and in our Saviour's explanation of it, 'Matt. xiii. 38, they are called "the children of the kingdom;" and when the wicked, the hypocrites and false professors, who had long appeared in the church of Christ as his faithful people, shall be detected and burnt up, "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." verse 43. The state of Christ's church here upon earth is militant; that is, in a state of spiritual warfare, having to contend with three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to "fight the good fight of faith," (1 Tim. vi. 12,) under Jesus, the "Captain of our salvation;" (Heb. ii. 10.) But in heaven the church of God is triumphant, having overcome all its enemies by the blood of the Lamb, and come off "more than conquerors through him that loved it." Rom. viii. 37. Then the church will sing the song of victory, saying, "Salvation to our God, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. vii. 10. giving the whole glory of their salvation unto God and his Christ, for ever and ever.

Q. What is meant by the other expression in the Collect, God's "household?"

A. It means his family. In the Gospel for the day, God is called a Householder, that is, the head of a family; and this family is his church. For though, in one sense, God is the Father of all men, inasmuch as he created them; yet he is the *reconciled* Father only of true believers, who alone are made partakers of the privileges of children; "for they are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Wherefore come out from among them (that is from unbelievers) and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and

I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor vi. 16—18.

Q. Does the Collect give any farther description of the people of God, who are his church, and household ?

A. Yes : it describes them as " leaning only upon the hope of God's heavenly grace ; " and this is a very essential mark of God's people, and distinguishes them from all others, who have something in themselves that they lean upon. For others usually trust to their own obedience as the ground of their acceptance with God, and to their own strength to practise what they call their duty ; whereas true Christians know that they are sinners before God, that their very best works are defective and defiled, and therefore they lean upon Christ, who is indeed " the hope of God's heavenly grace," that through his merits they may be justified and saved. And they not only lean upon him, that they may be accepted with God, but also for strength, that they may live according to his will, knowing that " without him they can do nothing," that is truly good and acceptable unto God ; John xv. 5. and therefore they lean upon his grace, that thereby they may be enabled to walk in his commandments. And, further, they lean upon him *only* : they do not trust partly in their own works, and then think that when they have done as well as they can, Christ will make up their deficiency ; but they trust in Christ alone for salvation : nor do they lean partly upon his grace, and partly upon their own strength to co-operate with that grace, but they trust in his grace alone, without which they know that they can render no acceptable obedience unto God.

Q. What do we here pray that God will do for his " church and household ? "

A. That he will " keep " them " continually in his true religion. "

Q. What is God's true religion ?

A. It is the worshipping and serving God, in that

way which he has declared will be acceptable to him in his holy word ; and includes a right and true faith, producing obedience to his commandments both in our hearts and lives. We must not, therefore, form our ideas of God according to our corrupt fancies, and think that he is such an one as ourselves ; but we must believe of him according as he hath revealed himself in the Scriptures, “ for without faith it is impossible to please God.” Heb. xi. 6. For want of this principle, Cain, though he professèd to be religious, was rejected ; whilst his brother Abel was accepted, because, “ by faith, he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” Heb. xi. 4. And to be truly religious, our conversation and our conduct must be suitable to our Christian profession ; for St. James says, “ If any man seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” James i. 27. And we pray unto God to keep his church and household *continually* in his true religion, knowing that, not he that endures for a while, but “ he that endures unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Matt. xxiv. 13.

Q. For what end do we beseech the Lord to keep his church and household continually in his true religion ?

A. “ That they, who do lean only upon the hope of his heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by his mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” They must have God’s mighty power to support, protect, and keep them *evermore* in all dangers to which they may be exposed ; and having him, they have an Almighty Protector, who perfectly knows what help they want, and is able and willing to succour and defend them. But this privilege belongs to those alone, “ who lean only upon the hope of God’s heavenly grace,” and is given unto them through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him, in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. Who is God's blessed Son, here spoken of?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. How was he manifested, or made known, unto us?

A. By his taking upon him our nature, and coming into the world.

Q. How was he manifested to be the Son of God?

A. He was manifested to be the Son of God in various ways; sometimes by a voice from heaven, as at his baptism and transfiguration, "saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5. The divine words that he spake proved him also to be the Son of God, for "he spake as never man spake," John vii. 46; "and the people were astonished at his doctrine," Matt. vii. 28. He was manifested also to be the Son of God by the miracles which he wrought, and particularly by the manner in which he performed them; for though Moses and the Prophets did many miracles, yet they did them all at the command of God, and prayed to him for his assistance in

the doing of them ; but the miracles that Christ wrought, were done by him in his own name, and by his own Divine power ; and the miracles which were done by the Apostles were all done in his name, which was a further confirmation of his being the Son of God. He was declared also to be the Son of God even in his lowest humiliation, when he hung upon the cross ; so that the centurion was obliged to confess, " Truly this was the Son of God," Matt. xxvii. 54 : and especially at his resurrection ; wherefore St. Paul says, " he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. i. 4. In these, and in many other particulars, was Jesus manifested to be the Son of God.

Q. For what purpose was he manifested ?

A. For these important ends, " that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life."

Q. What are the works of the devil ?

A. All sin and wickedness whatsoever, which, in the Epistle for the day, is called " the transgression of the law," 1 John iii. 4. that is, the breaking of God's commandments. For he that committeth sin is of the devil : for the devil sinneth from the beginning ;" 1 John iii. 8 ; and our Saviour particularly instances lying and murder, as coming from, and making men like to, the devil, John viii. 44. " Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar and the father of it."

Q. How was the Son of God manifested to *destroy* the works of the devil ?

A. " He was manifested to take away our sins," 1 John iii. 5. to take away the guilt of them, and deliver us from the punishment due to them, by dying in our stead upon the cross ; and hence he is said to have

“spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (that is, upon the cross) Col. ii. 15. and “through death to have destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Heb. ii. 14. And he was manifested also to take away the love and dominion of sin out of the hearts of his people, and to deliver them from the practice of it in their lives; for “whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him.” 1 John iii. 6. It is thus that Christ destroys the works of the devil.

Q. What was the Son of God manifested that he might make us?

A. The sons of God and heirs of eternal life. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John iii. 1. True believers have God for their Father, which is so great a blessing as cannot fully be described; and they are “heirs of eternal life:” as children when they come of age inherit their father’s property, so believers, who are the children of God, shall inherit eternal life, which is an “inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” 1 Pet. i. 4. For if we be the children of God, “then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Rom. viii. 17.

Q. What do we pray for in the Collect as “having this hope?”

A. We pray that God will grant us that “having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure.” This prayer contains the evidence of our being interested in these blessings: they are not given to all, but “every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 John iii. 3. But we are not so to understand this expression, as that we can be as pure as Christ himself, for that is impossible; neither can it be the Apostle’s meaning in this place, since he says in this

Epistle, "If we say we have no sin," we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8. Nor must we suppose from hence, that we can make ourselves pure by any power or ability of our own, for that would be to contradict the whole tenor of Scripture. But this passage is to be understood in the same sense as a similar one, Phil. ii. 12, where St. Paul says. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and then immediately adds, to put them in mind that the work is of God, and not of themselves, "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." ver. 13. Our church, therefore, very properly puts this into a prayer, that *God will grant us*, "that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves even as he is pure;" that is, that he will enable us always to have the pure and holy example of Jesus Christ before our eyes, and strive in all points to follow him, by crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, not suffering any filthy communication to proceed out of our mouths, and living by his grace in purity of heart and life, knowing that the impure and unholy are still under the dominion of the devil, and will be excluded from everlasting life.

Q. How will the Son of God "appear again?"

A. "With power and great glory." This is fully described in the Gospel for the day, where we are told, that when Christ shall come to judge the world, "the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

Q. For what end do we pray that we may "purify ourselves even as he is pure?"

A. That, "when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his

eternal and glorious kingdom." As it follows in the Epistle before mentioned: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. Believers shall then be made like unto Christ in holiness: sin, which is now their heaviest burden, shall then be completely done away, and they shall be perfectly holy, and consequently perfectly happy. And they shall also be like him in glory; for he "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 21. And what adds to their happiness is, that the kingdom which they shall inherit is an eternal kingdom: not like the kingdoms of this world, which soon come to an end, and which those who have must leave for others, but "a kingdom which cannot be moved," Heb. xii. 28; and shall last for ever and ever. It is also a glorious kingdom, far exceeding all earthly glory, as high as heaven is above the earth, or as the glory of the mid-day sun exceeds the feeble light of a candle. In this eternal and glorious kingdom, Jesus, the Son of God, "liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THE SUNDAY CALLED SEPTUAGESIMA,

OR THE

THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully

delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. What do we ask of God in this Collect?

A. That he will "favourably hear the prayers of his people." Psalm lxxv. 2. "O Thou that hearest prayer unto thee shall all flesh come." *

Q. What do we here acknowledge that we are justly punished for?

A. Our offences. When the people of God offend, he will be sure to punish them; as God said to his ancient people the Jews, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Amos, iii. 2. God has many ways of doing this: sometimes by national calamities, such as war, famine, pestilence, and the like: thus God punished his ancient people the Jews, and at length brought the king of Babylon with his army upon them, who destroyed their city and temple, and carried them away captive. Sometimes by family afflictions, such as the loss of near and dear relatives, who are, perhaps, taken away by death, and the family left unprovided for; or by loss of property, whereby those who once lived in credit and prosperity are reduced to a state of want and dependence; or by having untoward and rebellious children, who, instead of being a comfort to their parents, cause nothing but grief and vexation. And sometimes, by personal afflictions, as sickness; or by having their character taken away unjustly: or, what is worse than all to the people of God, by distress of soul, when God, offended by their sins, withdraws the consolation of his Spirit, which is especially the case of those who have turned back unto sin after having

* See this subject more fully explained in the Collect for the First Sunday after the Epiphany.

known the Lord, and are constrained to say, with David, "Restore unto me, O Lord, the joy of thy salvation." Psalm li. 12. These are some of the methods by which God punishes his people; and the cause of his so dealing with them, is for their offences, because they are sinners, and transgressors of his law; and therefore the Psalmist says, "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth;" Psalm xxxix. 11; for if man was not a sinner, it would be inconsistent with God, as a just and upright Being, to afflict or punish him, as it is evident he does.

Q. Do, then, the afflictions which God sends for the punishment of his people's offences, make any atonement or satisfaction for them?

A. No, not at all; because sin is such an infinite evil, that nothing can ever atone for it, but the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ; for if any thing else could have made atonement for sin, then Christ need not have died. Besides, God sends these afflictions for a very different end, not to make any satisfaction for sin, but for the same purpose that a kind father corrects his children when they do amiss, or a skilful physician gives nauseous medicines to his patient, for his benefit; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;—(and he does this) for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness," Heb. xii. 6—10; that we may be humbled before him, and learn that it is "an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord." Jeremiah ii. 19.

Q. What is the conduct of God's people under their afflictions?

A. They justify God in all his dispensations towards them, and say, We are "justly punished for our offences." When the wicked are afflicted, they murmur against God, and complain as though they were hardly dealt with; they are "like a bullock unaccustomed to the

yoke;" Jer. xxxi. 18 : but the people of God, in their afflictions, are enabled, by Divine grace, to confess that they deserve all, yea, and much more than all that is brought upon them; nay, that if God was to deal with them according to their deserts, they would not only have affliction in this life, but everlasting misery in hell. Thus Nehemiah justified God, and said, "Thou art just, O Lord, in all that is brought upon us: for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." Neh. ix. 33; and Ezra said, "Thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." Ezra. ix. 13.

Q. Having confessed "that we are justly punished for our offences," what mercy do we pray for from our offended God?

A. That we "may be mercifully delivered;" saved from our sins, and from all those evils which sin brings upon us. It is to be observed that God's people under affliction pray unto him for deliverance; and this is another mark whereby they are distinguished from all others. When ungodly men are afflicted, they commonly do not see the hand of God in their afflictions, but attribute them to chance, bad fortune, or ill-luck; neither do they pray unto God to deliver them, except, perhaps, when they are at the point of death, and every other means hath failed them: thus the Psalmist says, "When they are at their wit's end, then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble." Psalm cvii. 27. Oftentimes they seek to deliver themselves out of trouble by unlawful and dishonest means; and how often do they fly to wrong sources of comfort, and try to find relief by drinking to excess! But the people of God know that all their afflictions come from him, and therefore they pray that he will in his own good time and way, deliver them; and they know (as has been already observed) that their troubles are all just and right, and sent on account of their offences, and therefore they pray, as in

the Collect, "that they may be mercifully delivered." Thus David prayed, "Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul : O save me, for thy mercy's sake." Psalm vi. 4.

Q. What are the motives or arguments in this Collect, by which the people of God urge their request ?

A. The first is the goodness of God—"that we may mercifully be delivered by thy goodness." They know that the Lord is a good, bountiful, and gracious God, who takes no pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures ; and therefore they are encouraged to pray unto him for deliverance. It was this that encouraged the prophet Jeremiah in his afflictions : "The Lord (says he) is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him : for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. iii. 25, 33. Another argument is the glory of God—"For the glory of thy name :" that is, that God's name may be honoured and glorified, either by delivering his people out of their troubles, or by supporting them under them. The glory of God is what he has in view in all his dispensations, and it is also what his people should always aim at. In this Collect there is not one argument drawn from ourselves ; but from the goodness of God, and for the glory of his name : so the Psalmist prayed, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name : deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name sake :" Psalm. lxxix. 9 : and both these arguments are pleaded "through Jesus Christ our Saviour," for it is by him alone that we experience the goodness of God, and through him alone that the name of God is glorified ; "who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

THE SUNDAY CALLED SEXAGESIMA.

OR, THE

SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do ; Mercifully grant, that by thy power we may be defended against all adversities ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we acknowledge in this solemn appeal to the Lord God ?

A. That he " seeth that we put not our trust in any thing that we do." In this acknowledgment, it may be observed, first, that true Christians are fruitful in good works, even in a higher degree than those who boast of them ; and secondly, that however they may abound in good works yet they put no trust in them whatsoever.

Q. How does it appear that true Christians are more fruitful in good works than others ?

A. If we examine the good works (as they are called) of the generality of mankind, who have no true faith in Christ, we shall find them exceedingly defective : all that they seem to aim at is, not to do positive evil ; if they are just in their dealings, moral in their outward behaviour, and occasionally give a little money to charitable purposes, they think themselves very good people : but true Christians not only do these things, but much more ; they endeavour to have respect unto all God's commandments, to love him, to serve him, to have regard to his holy name and ordinances ; and not only to " cease to do evil, but to learn to do well." Isaiah i. 16, 17. In the Epistle for the day, St. Paul blames the Corinthians for their being so ready to credit

vain-glorious boasters, and shows them how much more he suffered for the cause of Christ. Again : the virtues of unbelievers proceed from wrong motives, for they either do their works "to be seen of men," and get the applause of the world, as the Pharisees did, Matt. xxiii. 5; or else to build up "their own righteousness," Rom. x. 3; and this makes all their works, however beneficial they may be to men, odious and abominable in the sight of God. But the good works of true believers spring from proper motives, faith in Christ, love to his name, and a desire to promote the glory of God : and they do not put their trust in any of their good works, nor in all of them together, but acknowledge that they are "unprofitable servants," Luke xvii. 10; and give the whole glory of what is good in them to God, saying, with St. Paul, "by the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Q. Why is it that true Christians do not trust in their good works ?

A. Because they know that their best works are imperfect and mixed with sin, so that they cannot justify us, or procure for us the favour of God. St. Paul therefore determines to put no trust in his own righteousness, but desires above all things, to "win Christ, and be found in him; not having his own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9.

Q. What do we pray in the Collect to be defended against ?

A. "All adversities;" that is, whatsoever is contrary to our true happiness, and would obstruct us in the way to heaven. It does not mean poverty or affliction, which is sometimes called adversity; for these things, when God appoints them, are designed for our benefit; but it means spiritual adversity, which is often connected with worldly prosperity; and especially sin, and whatsoever leads to it; such as the love of

the world, and a careless and trifling frame of spirit. It is against all such adversities as these, we must pray to be defended.

Q. How do we pray to be defended against them?

A. By the power of God. The church makes a solemn appeal to God, as the searcher of hearts, that he sees and knows "that we do not put our trust in any thing that we do;" we do not expect to be defended on account of our good works, nor by our own strength; but our trust is in the power of God: we know that he alone can defend us, and therefore we pray that he will "mercifully grant, that by his power we may be defended against all adversities." It was thus that Jehoshaphat, the good king of Judah, prayed in his adversity: "O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heaven? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." 2 Chron. xx. 6, 12.

Q. Through whom do we pray that God will defend us by his power against all adversities?

A. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord:" for it is only for his sake that God will mercifully exert his power. If, instead of putting our trust in his merits and righteousness, we are trusting in what we do, God will manifest his power indeed, but it will not be to defend, but to punish us; but if we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and pray through him for help, we shall find that his "grace will be sufficient for us, his strength be made perfect in our weakness, and that the power of Christ will rest continually upon us." 2 Cor. xii. 9

THE SUNDAY CALLED QUINQUAGESIMA,

OR THE

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this, for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Q. What is charity?

A. It means love; universal love to our fellow-creatures, springing from the love of God and of Christ in our hearts: in the Collect it is called "a most excellent gift, the very bond of peace and of all virtues," as it is that heavenly grace which unites them all together; and in the Epistle for the day (from which the Collect is evidently taken) there is a full description of the nature of charity.

Q. How is charity described in the Epistle for this day?

A. It is described thus: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not" that is, doth not boast of "itself; is not puffed up," with pride, vain-glory, or self-conceit; "doth not behave itself unseemly," that is improperly, in a manner unsuitable to the Christian character; "seeketh not her own," neither her own profit nor her own praise, but the good of others and the glory of God; "is not easily provoked;" that is, bears with much patience the provocations of others; "thinketh no

evil," meditates no evil designs against others, nor encourages evil reports to their disadvantage; "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," takes no delight in sin, or in hearing of the failings of others, but rejoices when the truth of God flourishes in the world, and when those who make a profession of religion walk agreeably to the same: as St. John says to Gaius, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth," 3 John 4; "beareth all things," as afflictions from God, with patience and submission to his will, and provocations from men with Christian meekness; "believeth all things," for charity is connected with faith, believing all things which God has revealed in his holy word; "hopeth all things;" for charity is also connected with hope; and its hopes are placed, not on the vain things of this world, but on the promises of God, made to us in and through Christ. "which hope is as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast," Heb. vi. 19, 20: and charity hopes always the best that it can of others, consistently with truth. "Endureth all things." Lastly, the Apostle shows its superiority over the most eminent gifts and graces; for "charity never faileth;" but "prophecies shall fail," because they shall be all at length accomplished; "tongues shall cease," for the distinction of languages shall hereafter be done away; "knowledge shall vanish away," because we now only know in part, but in heaven we shall have perfect knowledge, as being in a perfect state, which is compared to arriving at the age of manhood, when we shall put away all the childish things of time and sense. In that blessed place, also, we shall have no occasion for faith and hope, which are now such eminent graces in the Christian character; because faith hath respect to things that are unseen, but then we shall see God as he is: and hope is the desire of some future good, but then we shall be put in possession of all that we can wish for, and have all our desires satisfied. But charity, or

love, will last for ever, for the love of God, and of Christ, and of each other, will constitute the happiness of heaven; and, therefore, "the greatest of these is charity." 1 Cor. xiii. 4—13. Thus we see how very different this great and comprehensive virtue is, from the mistaken views which many persons have of charity, who think, that relieving the poor is all that is meant by it; whereas, men may do this, and much more, and yet have no true charity in the sight of God.

Q. What has the Lord taught us concerning our doings without charity?

A. That they are nothing worth. This refers particularly to the Epistle before mentioned, where the Apostle instances some of the highest gifts and attainments, and shows, that if these were done without charity, they would profit us nothing. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," that is, though I had more eloquence than any man ever possessed, or could even preach the Gospel like an angel from heaven; "and have not charity (or love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal:" I might be heard and admired, but I should be only like those instruments that make a pleasant sound, but have neither life nor motion. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith (meaning miraculous faith, or the power of working miracles, but not true and saving faith, for that, as the same Apostle teaches us, "worketh by love, or charity," Gal. v. 6) so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, (as a martyr to the cause of Christ) and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. So that, whatever gifts we may have, and how many works so ever we do, yet they will be all unacceptable to God, if they do not spring from love in our hearts; for without this divine charity, "all our doings," seem

they never so good, "are nothing worth" in the sight of God.

Q. How may we obtain this grace of charity?

A. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost, who alone can pour it into our hearts; "Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity:" for love is called "the fruit of the Spirit." Gal. v. 22. We must therefore earnestly pray, as the Collect teaches us, that God will make us partakers of this blessing, by sending the Holy Ghost, that by his gracious operation he may pour it into our hearts.

Q. What does the Collect say of the state of every one who lives without charity?

A. That without it "whosoever liveth is counted dead before God." Such a person is "dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. ii. 1. He hath no spiritual life in him, and though by having a form of religion he may appear to be alive before men, yet before God he is dead. To such awful characters our Lord said, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Rev. iii. 1.

Q. For whose sake do we pray that God will grant us this most "excellent gift of charity?"

A. For Jesus Christ's sake, his only Son, our Lord; for he purchased it for us; he set us a pattern of the most perfect love, by coming into the world out of pure compassion to save us, sinners; he prayed for his murderers to his heavenly Father, when he hung upon the cross; and we are exhorted to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour," Eph. v. 2. "Beloved if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," 1 John iv. 11.

NOTE. *Septuagesima*, means SEVENTY; *Sexagesima*, SIXTY; and *Quinquagesima*, FIFTY; and these three Sundays before Lent are so called, because each of them, though not exactly, is very near such a number of days before Easter.

THE FIRST DAY OF LENT,

COMMONLY CALLED

ASH WEDNESDAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting, God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is the meaning of the word Lent?

A. It is an old English word, signifying the *Spring*, and consists of forty days, of which this day is the first, to be kept in memory of our Saviour's fasting forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, Matt. iv. 1, 2; and it is called Lent, or the Spring Fast, because it always happens at this season of the year.

Q. Why is this day called Ash Wednesday?

A. Because on this day, those who were convicted of any notorious sin were publicly excommunicated, or cast out of the church; and on this occasion they appeared clothed in sackcloth, in token of humiliation, and the bishop sprinkled ashes upon their heads: this day was therefore called the Day of Ashes, from which circumstance it still retains the name of Ash Wednesday.

Q. Would it not be preferable if the same practice was observed amongst us?

A. As to the ceremonial part of it, the sprinkling of ashes and being clothed in sackcloth, it savours, per-

haps, much of superstition, which was common in that early age : but with regard to putting notorious sinners out of the church, our church calls it a godly discipline, and says, it is much to be wished that it might be restored again ; and until this can be done, she has appointed an office, called “**Commination**,” that is, a “denouncing of God’s anger against sinners ;” wherein some of the curses, which God has threatened in his word against transgressors, are read, and the congregation acknowledge them to be all just and true, by saying Amen after every one ; “that, being admonished of God’s wrath against sinners, they may be moved to repentance, and to fly from such sins, for which they acknowledge the curse of God to be due.” (Commination Service.)

Q. What do you think of the objection which some people make against joining in this service, that they do not like to curse their neighbours ?

A. It is a very foolish one, and shows that they greatly mistake the meaning of it. If, indeed, they were to speak the truth, they would confess, that they were afraid of cursing themselves rather than their neighbours ; unless they imagine themselves to be so good, that God’s threatenings do not apply to them. But the church means no such thing, as that, by the people’s saying Amen at the end of every one of the curses, they are to pray for vengeance ; but it is a solemn acknowledgment that they are guilty sinners, and deserve God’s wrath and indignation ; which is so far from imprecating God’s vengeance, that it is always a part of true repentance. Besides, these curses are all taken out of the holy Scriptures ; and whether we come and acknowledge them to be due to us, or not, there they stand against all transgressors ; nor will our abstaining from church on this day at all alter the sentence pronounced against us as sinners in the word of God. If, then, we would be delivered from the curse of the law, we must confess our guilt with

penitent hearts, and look unto Christ for pardon ; and then we shall find, that “ he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” Gal. iii. 13 ; and for our comfort, the Collect for this day affords great encouragement to penitent sinners, as well as furnishes us with a most excellent prayer for true repentance.

Q. What encouragement does the Collect afford to penitent sinners ?

A. First, by the consideration of God’s goodness to his creatures—he “ hateth nothing that he hath made : ” which seems to be taken from Ezek. xviii. 23, “ Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God ; and not that he should return from his ways, and live ? ” The same point also is urged throughout the whole chapter : and again, chap. xxxiii. 11, as if to remove all doubts of the truth of it, God condescends to confirm it by his oath, saying, “ As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ? ” A second encouragement, is God’s dealings with penitent sinners—he forgiveth the sins of all them that are penitent : “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.” Isa. lv. 7. Many such promises as these are made in the Scriptures to penitent sinners, even to the vilest, though their sins be as red as scarlet or crimson, Isa. i. 18 ; “ Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” But these promises are all made in and through Christ ; for his blood alone cleanseth from all sin, 1 John i. 7. God also has ever been faithful to his promises, so that there was never a penitent sinner, who came to him for

pardon, that was rejected ; as might easily be shown in the case of David, Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, St. Paul, and others recorded in Scripture : and our Lord Jēsus Christ pledges his own word, that he will not in any wise cast out those that come unto him, John vi. 37. Here, then, is the greatest encouragement given to all true penitent sinners.

Q. What is it to be penitent ?

A. It is well explained by these expressions in the Collect, having “ new and contrite hearts,” and “ worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness.”

Q. What is meant by new and contrite hearts ?

A. The heart of every man, by nature, is so exceedingly bad, that it is incapable of producing true repentance : our Saviour teaches us, that it is full of all manner of evil, Mark vii. 21—23 ; “ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts,” &c. and the prophet Jeremiah says, that it is “ deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” Jer. xvii. 9 ; so that it is called, *a heart of stone*, as being hard and insensible of any good impression. Hence, in order to repentance, it must be changed, and made a new heart ; soft, tender, and contrite ; that is, touched with a lively sorrow for sin : without this, no outward professions of repentance, or formal confessions of sin, will avail ; for the sacrifice which God delights in, is “ a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm li. 17.

Q. What is it “ worthily to lament our sins, and acknowledge our wretchedness ?”

A. This is the sure effect of a new and contrite heart, and always accompanies true repentance. The true penitent “ laments his sins,” not as the worldly man laments them, because they have brought him into difficulties, destroyed his health, or ruined his reputation ; but because he has sinned against God, his Creator and Benefactor ; because he has grieved the

Holy Spirit: and when he considers, that his sins brought the Son of God to the cross, then it is that his heart is melted down with godly sorrow: "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced," (that is, on Christ) "and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." Zech. xii. 10. The true penitent also "acknowledges his wretchedness;" confesses himself to be a miserable and guilty sinner, who deserves nothing but everlasting punishment, and has nothing in himself to recommend him to the Divine favour: thus Job said, "Behold, I am vile," Job xl. 4; and the publican, "God be merciful unto me, a sinner," Luke xviii. 13. All this the true penitent does "worthily;" not that he makes any merit of his repentance, or trusts in it in any manner to procure the pardon of his sins, for that would be doing it very unworthily; but the meaning is, that he does it in a proper and suitable manner, with humility and sincerity, as becomes a guilty creature before a pure and holy God.

Q. How can we have new and contrite hearts?

A. We must pray, as in the Collect, that God will create and make them in us, for it is he alone who can do it: thus David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," Psalm li. 10. And God promises to do this for his people, saying, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh," Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Q. What is the end or design of repentance?

A. "That we may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Q. How is God said to be "the God of all mercy?"

A. He is so to all penitent sinners, and to them

only ; as we learn from the Epistle for this day, where it is said, that " he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil," Joel ii. 13 : but to the wicked and impenitent, " God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth ; the Lord revengeth, and is furious ; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies," Nahum i. 2 : and our Saviour, who came into the world on purpose to save sinners, said, " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke xiii. 3, 5.

Q. What is it to have perfect remission and forgiveness ?

A. It is to have all our sins completely pardoned, and to be restored to God's favour as if we had never sinned. This comes to us only " through Jesus Christ our Lord : " it is not on account of our repentance, but only for the sake of Jesus Christ, that God will pardon sin ; for he " died for our sins," 1 Cor. xv. 3 ; " he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 2 ; and his " blood cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7. Nay, it is Christ alone that giveth repentance, for " him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights ; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honour

and glory, who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. To whom do you pray in this Collect ?

A. To our Lord Jesus Christ, for he it was who "fasted forty days and forty nights," when he was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Matt. iv. 1, 2.

Q. Why did our Lord Jesus Christ fast forty days and forty nights ?

A. "For our sake."

Q. In what respects did he do this *for our sake* ?

A. Whatsoever Christ did when he was upon earth, was for his people, that through his obedience they might be justified, and by his sufferings their sins might be pardoned : as, therefore, Moses at the giving of the law, and Elijah the great restorer of it, who were both remarkable types of Christ, "fasted forty days and forty nights," Deut. ix. 9, 1 Kings xix. 8 ; so Christ did the same when he was about to enter upon his public ministry : and as his fasting was preparatory to his being tempted of the devil, so he was pleased to do this, that he might sympathise with his people in their temptations, and succour them when they are tempted, Heb. ii. 18, and iv. 15 ; "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He designed also to teach us, by his example, how to resist the great enemy of our souls—namely, by having recourse continually to the word of God ; for in this way Christ overcame the devil, as it is recorded at large in the gospel for this day.

Q. How did the devil tempt Christ ; and in what manner did our Saviour handle the word of God. so as to overcome his temptations ?

A. First of all, the devil, who always makes his assaults where he thinks is the weakest part, endeavoured to take advantage of our Saviour's hunger after his long fasting, by persuading him to command stones to be made bread; but our Saviour, who would not so distrust his heavenly Father's care, nor yet work a miracle at the solicitation of the devil, overcame this temptation by quoting a passage of Scripture, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Deut. viii. 3. The devil, having thus failed in tempting Christ to distrust his heavenly Father, tried next to tempt him to presumption; and for this purpose took him to Jerusalem, and set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down:" and as Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, he also quoted a passage of Scripture from Psalm xci. 11, 12; "He shall give his angels charge over thee;" but artfully leaving out a very important part, "to keep thee in all thy ways," and going on to the next, "in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone:" but Christ answered this by another passage from Deut. vi. 16, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," which he would have done, had he complied with this suggestion. The devil then took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" but Christ, whose mind was not set upon such things as these, overcame this last temptation of the devil, by quoting another passage of Scripture, from Deut. vi. 13, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Matt. iv. 11.

Q. What is meant by the prayer which our church here draws from our Saviour's fasting and temptation,

“Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, &c.?”

A. What is commonly understood by the word “*abstinence*,” is religious fasting: abstaining for a certain time from food, as a token of humiliation, and an acknowledgment that we are unworthy of the food we eat; as well as to check and mortify our corrupt appetites; accompanied with solemn prayer to God (for it is of no use without prayer): and however lightly some may think of this, yet our Saviour has been pleased to sanction it, by giving directions about its due observance, Matt. vi. 16—18. “Moreover when ye fast be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance,” &c. Thus Daniel says, “I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.” The time for fasting, is either public, when a day of humiliation is appointed by authority, in consequence of national calamity, as in the case of the Ninevites, Jonah iii. 5—10. and of Jehoshaphat, who feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 2 Chron. xx. 3; or when appointed by the church, as Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, &c. or private, when we desire particularly to humble ourselves, and confess our sins in a solemn manner unto God, and have opportunity for the same, Dan. ix. 3. But the word abstinence will bear a much larger sense, and may signify temperance, or abstaining from all excess, whether of meat, drink, clothing, sleep, or any thing that has a tendency to pamper the flesh; and we must pray for “grace to use such abstinence” as this continually, all the days of our life, remembering our Saviour’s caution, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day,” (the day of judgment, or what will be the same to us, the hour of death) “come upon you unawares.” Luke xxi. 34.

Q. Why do we pray for "grace to use such abstinence?"

A. "That our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness." We know, that when the body is clogged with too much food, or when it is indulged by oversleeping, it then becomes dull, heavy, and unfit for spiritual exercises: this grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and indisposes us to obey his "godly motions in righteousness and true holiness;" nay, it leads the way to the commission of the vilest sins; and many a man may date his ruin to the gratification of his appetites. It is necessary, therefore, in order to obey the motions of God's Holy Spirit, "that our bodies should be kept under, and brought into subjection," 1 Cor. ix. 27: "for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom. viii. 13. We must therefore be temperate in all things, and so "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as to make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. xiii. 14.

Q. What is the end that we pray to have in view by using such abstinence?

A. The honour and glory of Christ—"to thy honour and glory." When we fast, we must not make a merit of it, or do it to gain the applause of men, as hypocrites do, nor as those did, of whom the Prophet says, "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, &c." Isa. lviii. 3—5. For they made a great profession of humiliation, but were all the while covetous, unmerciful, full of contention, and never truly repented of their sins, nor turned to God; for if we do thus, our fasting and our prayers will be abominable in his sight: nor should we be superstitious, as many are, who on certain days eat vegetables, fish, and other things, instead of flesh, and call that fasting, whereas it is only substituting one sort of food for another. As to those who cannot abstain long from food, let them make use of their Chris-

tian liberty, and eat in moderation ; remembering that the true end of fasting is, to repent of sin, “ to loose the bands of wickedness,” to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked, Isa. lviii. 6, 7 ; and in this way, they will honour the name of Christ. But especially it becomes us, as Christians, to honour Christ in our daily walk and conversation, by temperance in all things ; not like those whose happiness consists in sensual enjoyments, “ who are enemies of the cross of Christ ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame ; who mind earthly things ;” Phil. iii. 18, 19 ; but “ whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, (we should) do all to the glory of God,” 1 Cor. x. 31 ; and thus, by the grace of God, “ use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey his godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to the honour and glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.”

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves ; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls ; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What acknowledgment do we make in this Collect concerning our helpless condition ?

A. We solemnly appeal to Almighty God, that he

seeth "that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves." This acknowledgment is a confession of our helpless condition both of body and soul, and seems suggested by the history of the woman of Canaan, recorded in the Gospel for this day, whose daughter was "grievously vexed with a devil." She came and told her case to our blessed Saviour, and cried unto him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David:" and when Jesus, to try her faith, was pleased to make no answer, but a very discouraging one to his disciples, "she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me;" Matt. xv. 22, 25. thereby acknowledging that it was quite out of her power to do any thing for her poor daughter, and if Christ did not help her, she must still remain in that melancholy condition. In like manner, we here confess "that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves." We cannot of ourselves preserve our bodies in life or health, or heal them when they are sick; nor can we prevent the numerous accidents (as they are called) with which we are surrounded. We may, it is true, make use of the means; we may take food and medicine, and be as careful as possible to keep out of danger (as it is our duty to do); but unless God help us himself, and give us his blessing, it will be all in vain, "for (it is) in him (that) we live, and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 28. If this is the case with our bodies, it is much more so as to our souls: "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. iii. 5: and if we cannot even think a good thought, much less can we speak a good word, or do a good action. We have no power of ourselves to prevent our falling into sin, as might be proved from the case of St. Peter's denying Christ; nor any power of ourselves to help us out of it, when we have fallen: we have no power of ourselves to repent, or believe, or obey God's commandments, because by nature we are "dead in trespasses

and sins," Eph. ii. 1; and not only ungodly, but also "without strength." Rom. v. 6. Such is our condition through the fall of Adam; "we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves."

Q. What does the Collect teach us to do in this our helpless condition?

A. It teaches us to pray to Almighty God, who perfectly knows our state, for help: and the more sensible we are of our inability to help ourselves, the more earnest we shall be in seeking help of God. If we think our case is not so very bad, but that we can do something of ourselves, we shall not see the necessity of applying to God, "for the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," Luke v. 31; but if, like the woman of Canaan before mentioned, we feel that Christ only can help us, we shall come unto him, as she did, with humility, faith, and persevering prayer, crying, "Lord, help me;" or saying, as the Collect teaches us, "Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls."

Q. How do we pray that God will keep us outwardly in our bodies?

A. "That we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body:" that is, that it will please God to keep us in health and strength, to give us our daily bread, and supply us with those things which are needful for the support of our bodies; that he will protect us from those dangers to which we are every day exposed; and enable us to trust in his fatherly care for the supply of our wants, in submission to his holy will: and if, through Divine grace, we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," our Saviour has promised that all necessary things shall be added unto us; because our heavenly Father knoweth that we stand in need of them, Matt. vi. 32, 33.

Q. How do we pray that God will keep us inwardly in our souls?

A. That he will defend us "from all evil thoughts

which may assault and hurt the soul." Such is the corruption of our nature, that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually," Gen. vi. 5. This is the declaration of God himself, and therefore we may be certain of the truth of it; and our Saviour confirms it, by saying, "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts;" and then shows us what these evil thoughts are, namely, thoughts of adultery and fornication; thoughts of murder, such as anger, malice, hatred, and revenge; dishonest thoughts; covetous thoughts; wicked and deceitful thoughts; lascivious, impure and unclean thoughts; "an evil eye," looking after and desiring evil things; thoughts of blasphemy; proud thoughts; and foolish or vain thoughts. Every man who has paid any attention to his own heart, must acknowledge the truth of this, and that "all these evil things come from within, and defile the man," Mark vii. 21—23; or, as it is in the Collect, they "assault and hurt the soul." They are highly offensive in the sight of God, render us unfit for communion with him, are contrary to the nature of his Holy Spirit, bring guilt upon our consciences, and, unless restrained by Divine grace, will quickly break out into sinful actions, and finally ruin our souls: for "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James i. 15. We have great reason, then, to pray heartily unto God that he will defend us "from all evil thoughts," by giving us his Holy Spirit, that we may "walk" so as "to please God," and "abound more and more:" that we may obey his "will," which is our "sanctification;" and "know how to possess our vessel (that is, our bodies) in sanctification and honour;" because "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness;" as the Epistle for this day teaches us, 1 Thess. iv. 1—7. And if we would be defended from evil thoughts, we must abstain from such things as are likely to bring them into our minds; from reading im-

proper books, going into evil company, and frequenting vain and sinful amusements ; we must make the Scriptures our daily study, because they will supply us with good thoughts ; and, above all, pray earnestly unto God, that he will not leave us to our own evil hearts, but give us a principle of true holiness, “ through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And as our souls are continually assaulted and hurt by the evil within us, we must come, by faith, unto him, to wash our guilt away in the “ fountain ” of his precious blood, which is open “ for sin and uncleanness,” Zech. xiii. 1 ; that so we may have pardon for what is past, and grace for the time to come, through his merits, who died to “ redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,” Titus ii. 14.

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE COLLECT.

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is the description here given of the servants of God ?

A. They are described, first, as having “ hearty desires ” towards God ; and, secondly, by their humility, they are his “ humble servants.”

Q. What is it to have “ hearty desires ” towards God ?

A. It is to have the affections of the soul drawn forth in holy and fervent desires for communion with

God; and it arises from "the love of God" being "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," Rom. v. 5. We may see a bright example of this in David, the man after God's own heart: he compares the desires of his soul after God, to a thirsty hart, or stag, panting after water; "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm xlii. 1, 2. And again, Psalm lxxiii. 1—8, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." And then David expresses what he desired so greatly to see, namely, the "power and glory" of God, as he had seen it before "in his sanctuary;" the "loving kindness" of God, which is "better than life;" to praise his name, and to meditate upon his perfections: and then, says he, "my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." It is this that makes prayer a delightful service, quite different from the cold devotions of the formalist, which are merely a repetition of words, wherein the heart is unconcerned; but the servants of God "worship him in the Spirit;" that is, not only with their hearts, but by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, they have access unto God the Father, through Christ Jesus; Eph. ii. 18, "whom having not seen they love; and in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. Not that it is always thus with them, for often they "are in heaviness, through manifold temptations," 1 Pet. i. 6: they find their hearts dead and cold to God, and say, with David, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust:" but this is their grief and burden; they lament it, and pray, as he did, for quickening grace, saying, "Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word," Psalm cxix. 25.

Q. What is it to serve God with humility, or to be his "*humble servants*?"

A. It is, first, to have humble views of ourselves. The servants of God know that they are sinners, and transgressors of his law, and on this account they are truly humble before God: thus the Publican, when he came into the temple to pray, did it with the deepest humility, standing afar off, not daring so much as to lift up his eyes unto heaven, "but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner," Luke xviii. 13; and St. Paul, that eminent servant of God, said, "I am the chief" of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15.—They have also humble views of their own attainments. The same Apostle calls himself, "less than the least of all saints," Eph. iii. 8. They give the whole glory of what is good in them to God, ascribing it entirely to his grace, saying with the Apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am," 1 Cor. xv. 10; and after they have done all, they say, as our Lord has taught them, that they are "unprofitable servants," Luke xvii. 10. Thus they "serve the Lord with all humility of mind," Acts xx. 19; and endeavour, by his grace, to behave with humility to others; respectfully to their superiors, courteously to their inferiors, and humbly to all; as our Saviour has taught them, saying, "Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls," Matt. xi. 29. Such persons as these are indeed the servants of God, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," James iv. 6.

Q. What do we here ask of God for them?

A. First, that he will "look upon" their "*heartly desires*;" which implies that he will hear and answer their prayers, by giving them those things which they ask of him, so far as is for his glory and their good. And when the servants of God with humility of heart pray unto him for pardon of sin, for grace and holiness, for strength and protection, and express their desires

after his favour and loving kindness, God will certainly hear them.—They may be assured of this, for it is he who prepares their hearts to ask for these things: as the Psalmist says, “Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cause thine ear to hear,” Psalm x. 17. The Lord also has said by his prophet, “Unto this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word,” Isa. lxvi. 2.

Q. What do we pray for besides in this Collect?

A. That God will “stretch forth the right hand of his Majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies.” The world, the flesh, and the devil, the three great enemies of our souls, will be striving against us as long as we live, to tempt us to sin, and so bring us to destruction; we must therefore pray unto God to be our defence. He is a God of infinite “majesty;” his “is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty,” 1 Chron. xxix. 11; and “in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength,” Isa. xxvi. 4. Though our enemies be never so many or great, yet, if we pray unto him, he will “stretch forth his right hand” to defend us against them; which we here beseech him to do, in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath “loved us,” and through whom we shall be “more than conquerors,” Rom. viii. 37.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Q. What do we confess to Almighty God, in this Collect?

A. That "we for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished." The Collect teaches us; what we want continually to be put in mind of, that we are sinners, and have done wicked works. The best Christians confess this; the most upright persons in the congregation, when they join in this Collect, acknowledge that they are guilty of "evil deeds," such evil deeds as deserve punishment, that is, everlasting punishment in hell; "for the wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23; so that, if God was to deal with them according to their deserts, as he might justly do, they must go to that awful place of torment, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxii. 13; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark ix. 44. This subject has already been considered in the Collect for Septuagesima Sunday, where we acknowledge that "we are justly punished for our offences," even *now*; and here, that we "worthily deserve" to be so, not only in this life, but in the world to come.

Q. What do we pray for under these circumstances?

A. We pray for relief, that we may be delivered from this awful punishment which we deserve. And if we have a true sense of our danger, we shall pray with something like the same earnestness for help, as if we were ready to fall from a precipice, or to be drowned in the water. This prayer for relief, not only includes deliverance from future punishment, but also a present deliverance from the love, power, and dominion of sin; for sin is the cause of present and eternal misery, and we cannot obtain relief from the one, without the other: when we pray, therefore, for relief, we pray at the same time for holiness, because, without that "no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14. For "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm ix. 17.

Q. How do we pray for relief?

A. "By the comfort of God's grace, that we may mercifully be relieved." It is only by the grace, or unmerited favour of God, that we can be delivered from everlasting punishment. We confess, in this very Collect, that we deserve to be punished for our evil deeds; and consequently, our relief from this punishment must be owing to the mere mercy of God: and so is our deliverance from sin. We cannot of ourselves forsake sin, and live a holy life: it is only by God's grace that we can do this; by his giving unto us, of his rich mercy, his Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify our hearts. It is also by the "*comfort of his grace*:" if we are really sensible that we deserve punishment, it will be an unspeakable comfort for us to know that "with the Lord there is mercy;" Psalm cxxx. 7; as it was to the poor man unto whom our Saviour said, "Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Matt. ix. 2. And if we are really desirous of holiness, as all true Christians are, it will also be a great comfort for us to find the truth of that promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. Finally, we pray for this relief "through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" because it is only on his account that the grace and mercy of God can be communicated to us; he, by dying upon the cross, suffered himself the punishment which was due to us as transgressors, and the salvation of the soul from everlasting misery is the effect of his grace; "then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Job xxxiii. 24. It is through him also, that, being relieved "by the comfort of his grace," we are delivered from the love and practice of sin; and therefore it was said, that "his name should be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

THE COLLECT.

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people, that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we ask of God in this Collect?

A. That he will "mercifully look upon his people." We have prayed before, that God will "mercifully look upon our infirmities" (Collect for the third Sunday after the Epiphany); and again, that he will "look upon the hearty desires of his humble servants" (Collect for the third Sunday in Lent): here we only pray, in general, that he will "mercifully look upon his people;" which includes both the former petitions, and extends the prayer to all the circumstances in which his people may be placed. Thus David prayed. "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name." Psalm cxix. 132.

Q. Who are here meant by this expression, "thy people?"

A. In one sense, all men are the people of God, because he created them; and therefore it is said. "Know ye, that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Psalm c. 3. But although, in this sense, all men are his people, yet they are by nature a rebellious people, who have revolted against their Creator, and disowned his authority; and therefore none are properly the people of God, but true believers, whom St. Peter calls, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar

people ; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light : which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. It is upon them that we pray unto God to look in mercy. The Psalmist, considering the various mercies which God bestows upon his people, prays, for himself, that he may be interested in them ; " Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

Q. For what end do we pray that God will " mercifully look upon his people ? "

A. To " govern and preserve them evermore, both in body and soul." First, we pray that their bodies may be under God's government ; that they may be obedient to his will, being kept in temperance, chastity, and sobriety, according to the Apostle's direction, " Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof ; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead ; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Rom. vi. 12, 13. And not only their bodies, but their souls : for the heart is the principal thing which God regards, " For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1-Sam. xvi. 7. When the heart is under the direction of God, so as to " stand in awe of his word," Psalm cxix. 161, the body will be so too ; but the service of the body, without the soul, will never be acceptable to God. We pray also that God will preserve them, as well as govern them, both in body and soul ; which is much the same as what we prayed for in the Collect for

the second Sunday in Lent, that he would "keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls," &c. And lastly, that he will do this evermore, because we shall always stand in need of God's care and preservation, as long as we have either bodies or souls for him to preserve, which will be for ever. Even when the bodies of his people moulder away in the dust, God will govern and preserve them, and raise them up at the last day, "incorruptible, immortal," and "spiritual bodies." 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44, 53: and their souls also shall be "made perfect," Heb. xii. 23, and at length be re-united to their bodies: and so both soul and body shall be under the government and preservation of God for ever and ever.

Q. How do you pray that God will govern and preserve the bodies and souls of his people for evermore?

A. By his "great goodness."—"God is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Psalm cxlv. 9. "He is kind even to the unthankful and to the evil." Luke vi. 35. But his goodness is exceeding great to his people. David seems astonished at it, when he says, "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" Psalm xxxi. 19. It is by this attribute of God, that we beseech him to "govern and preserve his people evermore both in body and soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord." All the goodness of God comes unto us through him, for "in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John iv. 9.

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who of thy tender love towards mankind hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same, Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What was it that moved Almighty God to send his Son into the world?

A. His "tender love towards mankind." God saw the sad condition into which man had brought himself by sin; and as there was no other way in which he could have mercy upon sinners, consistently with his justice, but by giving up his co-equal and well-beloved Son; such was his love, his "tender love towards mankind," that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Rom. viii. 32. Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God, teaches us the great tenderness and wonderful compassion of the Father's love towards mankind, when he says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

Q. What did God the Father send his Son, "our Saviour Jesus Christ," to do for us?

A. He sent him, first, "to take upon him our flesh," that is, our nature; to have a body and a soul like our own, only without sin; and so to be really and truly a man. All which came to pass by his being conceived in

a miraculous manner by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. God the Father sent his Son also "to suffer death upon the cross:" this was the great end for which he took our nature upon him, as he himself frequently told his disciples, saying, that he came "to give his life a ransom for many." Mark x. 47.

Q. For what purpose did Christ "take upon him our flesh, and suffer death upon the cross?"

A. The great design of his doing this was to make atonement for sin, and reconcile us, guilty sinners, unto God; but, according to the pattern of the Collect, we must pass over this for the present, having to consider it more particularly on Good Friday; and we have now set before us another important object which Christ had in view by taking our nature, and dying for us on the cross; namely, "that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility."

Q. How does the act of Christ's taking upon him our nature, and dying upon the cross, appear to be an example of *great humility*?

A. First, (as the Epistle for this day informs us) on account of the dignity of his own nature. It was not a mere man like ourselves, not even the greatest of men, nor yet an angel or archangel, who humbled himself thus low; but it was Christ Jesus, the anointed Saviour (as his name signifies) the eternal Son of God, who was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God;"—He "who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. i. 15—17. The higher a person is in rank, the greater is his condescension in stooping low; but Christ is with the Father and the Holy Ghost the one supreme and eternal God, and therefore his humility was great indeed.

This appears yet further by considering how low he humbled himself. It would have been great humility in Christ to have been born like king Solomon in all his glory, and to have had the highest earthly honour and respect paid to him; but instead of that, when he "took upon him our flesh," he "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant:" he had no ambition after earthly greatness, but appeared as a poor man, even as the meanest of men. Again, he not only abased himself in his life, but, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death." He *humbled himself*, says the Apostle; it was a most astonishing act of humility in Christ, who is Life itself, "the Prince of life" (Acts iii. 15) and the Author and preserver of life to all his creatures, to die; and that not a common death, but a violent, bloody, shameful, and painful death, "even the death of the cross!" Phil. ii. 6—8. The cross was the most disgraceful of all punishments: it was not usually inflicted but on slaves, and on them only for the most atrocious crimes; so that it was much more infamous than the gallows is considered by us. In submitting to the death of the cross, Jesus bore all the ignominy that accompanied it: they mocked him, spit in his face, buffeted him; crucified him between two thieves, as if he had been the vilest of the three; insulted him in his dying agonies; and even after he was dead, one of the soldiers more daring than the rest, offered indignity to his lifeless corpse, by thrusting a spear into his side. Here then the humility of Jesus appears to be great indeed, in submitting to all this, not only as an atonement for sin, but "that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility," and learn of him "who was meek and lowly in heart." Matt. xi. 29.

Q. What part of our Lord's great humility, do we pray that we may follow?

A. We pray God mercifully to grant, that we may

“follow the example of his patience.” Christ suffered not only with great humility, but with the most astonishing patience. Moses was called the meekest man, and yet he “spake unadvisedly with his lips.” Psa. cvi. 33. Job is commended for his “patience,” James v. 11, and yet he often complained in a very unbecoming manner: but Christ bore all the affronts that were put upon him, without a murmuring word: “when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” And herein he left us “an example, that we should follow his steps.” To follow his example, then, we must suffer as he did, not for doing evil, but for righteousness’ sake: for this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God.” 1 Pet. ii. 19—23. And to follow the example of Christ’s humility, “the same mind” must be in us which was also in him: we must do “nothing through strife, or vain-glory,” for Christ sought the glory of God, and not his own praise; but “in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves.” We must look not on our “own things” (that is, not absolutely), but “on the things of others,” so as to help and counsel them, if they are our inferiors, to condescend to them, to be ready to do all kind offices for them, and, above all, to pray for them, and do all that we can to further them in the way of salvation: so shall we in some measure follow the example which our Saviour has set before us. Phil. ii. 3—5.

Q. What do we pray that we may “be made partakers of?”

A. “His resurrection.” It is, first, to be raised in this life from the death of sin to a life of righteousness; that as Christ died for sin, so we may die to sin; and

“as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,” Rom. vi. 4; that is, to have our hearts quickened by the same Divine power which raised him from the dead; Col. ii. 12, 13. To be “risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead.” And if we are partakers of this first resurrection, “the second death” will have “no power” to hurt us, Rev. xx. 6; but we shall be interested in all the blessings which Christ, by his rising from the dead, has procured for us, and be raised to glory at his coming: therefore St. Paul prays thus; “that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Phil. iii. 10, 11.

Q. Through whom do we pray for these blessings?

A. “Through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord:” for he hath not only left us an example, but is able also to give us grace and ability to walk in his steps, by giving us true humility, subduing our proud hearts, and impressing his image upon our souls. And it is through him alone that we can be made partakers of his resurrection; for He is “the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall never die.” John xi. 25, 26.

GOOD FRIDAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer

death upon the cross : who now liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. Why is this day called " Good Friday ? "

A. Because on this day we commemorate the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, although it is a mournful event, and has ever been kept by the church as a solemn fast, that we might humble ourselves for our sins, which were the cause of our Saviour's sufferings : yet, in respect of the blessings we receive by the death of Christ it is called " Good Friday," as being indeed a good day to us : and we are called upon, at the same time, to be thankful that " our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross."

Q. How was our Lord Jesus Christ betrayed ?

A. Judas Iscariot, one of his own disciples, who was a wicked, covetous man, and " a thief," John xii. 6, for " the love of money," which " is the root of all evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10, sold him to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver, and promised to betray him into their hands, when the multitude, who were very attentive to hear him, were absent ; for they were afraid to take him openly, because all the people " took him for a prophet," Matt. xxi. 46, Luke xxii. 2—6. Accordingly he went, with a company of armed men, into the garden, where Jesus had entered the same night with three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John ; and there pointed him out, by going to him and kissing him ; and so delivered him into their hands. Mark xiv. 43—46. " And immediately while he yet spake, cometh Judas one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders. And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he ; take him, and lead him

away safely. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. And they laid their hands on him, and took him." "All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled;" Matt. xxvi. 56; and particularly one from Psalm xli. 9, to which our Saviour alludes; "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." John xiii. 18.

Q. Into whose hands was Christ given up?

A. He was "given up into the hands of wicked men." All who were concerned in the death of Christ were wicked men. The soldiers who apprehended him, the priests who bribed Judas to betray him, particularly Caiaphas the high priest, unto whom Annas sent him: Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who, though a heathen, and a wicked man, was better than these bloody-minded priests, for he laboured hard to release him: Herod, who set him at nought with his men of war, and sent him back again to Pilate, by whom he was at length unjustly condemned, and suffered death upon the cross: These were all wicked men, as our Lord told his disciples, saying, "the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Matt. xxvi. 45.

Q. What did Christ suffer by dying the death of the cross?

A. He suffered greatly before he was actually crucified, and much more than the bodily pain which the death of the cross put him to. When, after supper, he withdrew into the garden, such was the prospect he had of his sufferings, that "he began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Mark xiv. 33, 34. He "kneeled down and prayed," that, if his Father was willing, "the cup"—that is, his sufferings—might be removed from him: and so great was his agony, that an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him, and the sweat fell from his body like "great drops of blood falling down to the

ground." Luke xxii. 41—44. His being betrayed also by one of his own disciples, "troubled his spirit," John xiii. 21. Besides this, he was denied by another, and forsaken by all. When he was brought before the high priest they blasphemed him, mocked him, struck him on the face, spit upon him, bribed false witnesses against him, and preferred a robber and a murderer before him. The next thing they did as St. John chap. xix. which is the Gospel for the day, informs us, was to scourge him: he was taken and scourged by the Roman soldiers, as their manner was, till the blood ran down his back in streams; for as Pilate did this to move the Jews to pity him, there can be no doubt but that it was very severe. They then crowned him with thorns, which was not only to mock him as a king, but the sharp points of the thorns, sticking into his temples, put him to extreme pain. They put on him also a purple robe in mockery; they took also the reed (or cane) which they had put into his hand as a mock sceptre, and smote him on the head, thereby driving the thorns deeper into his temples. At length they laid his cross upon him, to carry it to the place of execution, which was called Golgotha, or Mount Calvary, and signifies the "place of a skull." Crucifixion was not only a shameful death, as was observed in the last Collect, but a very painful and lingering death:—the cross was laid upon the ground, and the person who was to be crucified, stretched at full length upon it; his hands were nailed to the piece of wood that crossed it towards the top, and his feet to the long upright piece; and then it was lifted up, and fixed in a hole dug in the earth to receive it; which, as the body was suspended entirely by the hands and feet, usually dislocated every bone; as David, prophesying of the sufferings of Christ, said, "All my bones are out of joint." Psalm xxii. 14. It was also a lingering death: Christ hung in the greatest agonies for several hours together; and during this time they reviled him.

wagging their heads and calling upon him to save himself: and when, through extreme pain, his throat was parched with thirst, they mocked his torments by offering him vinegar to drink. But all this, intolerable as it was, was nothing to what he suffered in his soul: the death of the cross was an accursed death, and, as we have deserved the curse of God, so Christ took that upon himself when he stood in our place, and was made "a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal. iii. 13. In consequence of this, he bore the wrath of God, of which the prophet says, "Who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." Nah. i. 6. It is this which makes up the torments of hell; for they who go to that dreadful place, "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture (that is, without any thing to soften or mitigate it) into the cup of his indignation." Rev. xiv. 10. All this was poured out upon Christ. He could not, indeed, feel remorse of conscience, or the rage of evil passions, as the wicked do in hell, because he had done no sin; but every thing else he did feel; and his sufferings will appear to be great indeed, when we consider that the sins of the whole world were brought as it were to one point, and fell upon him, when he hung upon the cross: which made him utter that bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Matt. xxvii. 46. Psalm xxii. 1.

Q. Did our Lord Jesus Christ suffer all these willingly?

A. Yes: the Collect says he was "*contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross.*" If he had not, no one could have touched him; for he showed what his power was, by striking those who were sent to apprehend him "to the ground" only by his word, John xviii. 6. He could have commanded "more than twelve legions

of angels" to rescue him, Matt. xxvi. 53. But he submitted cheerfully to all his sufferings; and when he told his disciples of them before-hand, and Peter, out of mistaken tenderness, said, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee," he immediately rebuked him; called him Satan, that is, an adversary; and said it was an offence to him to speak against the sufferings and death to which he was about to submit. Matt. xvi. 22, 23.

Q. For whom was Christ contented to suffer these things?

A. For his "family," that is, for his faithful people: and therefore he said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." John x. 15. Christ suffered and died to make atonement for their sins, as the Epistle for the day (Hebrews x.) largely discourses of. It shows us, that all the sacrifices under the law, though appointed by God himself, could not atone for sin, because "it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." But Christ had "a body prepared" for him, in which "he offered one sacrifice for sins;" and by that "one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" so that on this account God hath made "a covenant" with them, to put his "law into their hearts," and to "write them in their minds," and to "remember their sins and iniquities no more." From all which it concludes, that "we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus:" we have him for our "high priest;" and by faith in him our consciences are sprinkled with his blood, and "our bodies washed with pure water;" concluding the whole with an exhortation to "love and to good works:" and if we have true faith in him, we shall see what an abominable thing sin is, which occasioned all his sufferings; and the love of Christ will constrain us to live to his glory, and not, by continuing in sin, to "crucify" him as it were "afresh, and put him to an open shame." Heb. vi. 6.

Q. What is the meaning of the prayer, that "we beseech Almighty God graciously to behold this his family?"

A. Therein we represent, as it were, the sufferings of Christ to the Father, and pray that he will now behold "his family," whom Christ hath purchased with his blood, *graciously* through him; that he will accept them as his children; have his eye continually upon them to bless them; and at last bring them to his family above, to sing the praises of their God and Saviour, saying, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6.

Q. How does the Collect conclude?

A. Having shown the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are now put in mind of his glorification. His sufferings have long since been over; "and after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, he for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his foot-stool;" Heb. x. 12, 13: where now he "liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

SECOND COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee; for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Q. What is meant by "the whole body of the church?"

A. The church, that is, the people of God, which in the last Collect was called his family, is here compared to a human body, which is composed of several members, as the eyes, the hands, the feet, and so on; so Christians "are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii. 27: some have one office in the church, and some another: some have one gift, and some another; and whatever talents each member has, they are given unto him for the good of the whole. Of this body, Christ is the head, and from him all his members derive strength, and nourishment. For God the Father "hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 22, 23.

Q. By whom is the whole body of the church governed and sanctified?

A. By God's Holy Spirit. All the gifts which God has given to his church, come from the Holy Spirit: for "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; for to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, faith, by the same Spirit; &c.—But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." 1 Cor. xii. 4, 8, 9, 11. All the members of Christ's body are governed and directed by the Spirit of God: by him they are "guided into all truth," John xvi. 13; and by him they are sanctified, that is, made holy, so as to "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" to mind "the things of the Spirit," to be led "by the Spirit." Rom. viii. 4, 5, 14; and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are, "in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Eph. v. 9. From hence it is evident, that all unholy persons, who are not governed and sanctified by God's holy Spirit, although they may be pro-

fessing Christians, yet are not the members of Christ's body the church, because "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9.

Q. What do we pray for the church, in this Collect?

A. We pray that God will "receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before him for all estates of men in his holy church." As on this day we call to mind the wonderful love of Christ, in giving himself up to suffer and die for his church, so it is very proper that we should in a more particular manner offer up our supplications and prayers for the church, according to the example of Christ, who on the same night in which he was betrayed poured forth his supplications for his people, that they might be kept "from the evil" of the world; "sanctified through the truth" of God, which is his word; united one with another, and with Christ himself; brought to be "with him," and "behold his glory;" and, finally, "that the love wherewith (the Father) loved him, might be in them, and he in them." John xvii. 26.

Q. What are the "supplications and prayers which we offer before God, for all estates of men in his holy church?"

A. "That every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve him." The members of Christ's church, like the members of our bodies, have their different parts allotted to them; and we here pray, that in their "vocation," that is, in whatsoever state God in his providence has placed them; and in their "ministry," that is, in their service (for all the members of Christ are his servants, and have something to do for the honour of their Master) they may serve God in a true and godly manner. Thus, for instance, we must pray for the ministers of Christ, that they may preach the Gospel with courage and fidelity, to the glory of God and the salvation of men, and that they may adorn their doctrine by a holy life and conversation; for the hearers,

that they may be “doers of the word, and not hearers only, lest they deceive their own selves,” James i. 22. For princes and magistrates, especially the king, that they may exercise their authority to the glory of God, “the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well;” for their subjects, that they may obey, honour, and submit themselves unto them “for the Lord’s sake,” 1 Pet. ii. 13—15. For parents, that they may bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” and for children, that they may “obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right,” Eph. vi. 1—4. For masters, that they may “give unto their servants that which is just and equal, knowing that they also have a Master in heaven,” Col. iv. 1; and for servants, that they may “obey in all things their masters according to the flesh: not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.” For wives, that they may “submit themselves unto their own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord;” and for husbands, that they may “love their wives, and not be bitter against them,” Col. iii. 18, 19, 22. In short, whatsoever relation we stand in to one another, or whatever talents or gifts we may possess, we must pray for grace to serve God with them, as the Collect says, “truly,” that is, in sincerity and singleness of heart; and “godly,” having an eye to the glory of God in what we do, and not looking at our own interest; otherwise our services will not be acceptable in his sight. And, finally, from the comparison here made between the members of Christ and the members of our bodies, we are taught to be contented in that station in which God has placed us, and not to envy the superior gifts or more eminent stations of other Christians; even as one member of our bodies does not envy another: the foot doth not say, “because I am not the hand, I am not of the body;” nor doth the ear say, “because I am not the eye, I am not of the body;” but all the members move in that order

in which God has placed them; and so should it be with the members of Christ. In like manner, those Christians who are in more exalted situations are here taught not to look down with contempt upon their brethren in lower circumstances; for they are like the members of our bodies, which cannot do one without the other: "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you." And all the members of Christ are exhorted to feel for and with each other; as it is with our bodies: if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it," 1 Cor. xii. 15, 16. 21, 26. So true Christians, when they see any of their brethren in affliction, will endeavour to alleviate their distress, and bear part of their burdens; and when they see any one of them rejoicing, they will partake with him in his joy: worldly people, indeed, know nothing of this, and are influenced merely by self-interest; but the true church of Christ, as members of his body, endeavour thus to serve God in their "vocation and ministry:" which we here pray that they may do, "through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," who as on this day purchased the church by the shedding of his own most precious blood, Acts xx. 28.

THIRD COLLECT.

O MERCIFUL God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live; Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word: and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be

saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord ; who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. How do we address God in this Collect ?

A. As a "merciful God who hath made all men and hateth nothing that he hath made." Having, in the two former Collects, prayed for the family and church of God ; in this, we enlarge our petitions, and pray for the enemies of Christ ; as he himself did when he died upon the cross, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 34. We begin therefore by addressing God as a "merciful God, who hath made all men, and hateth nothing that he hath made, nor would the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live : " which has been already considered in the Collect for Ash Wednesday. But when we use such expressions as these, we must not suppose that God is like one of us, who needs to be moved to compassion by pathetic words ; for his mercy is above all that we can conceive, and "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts," Isa. lv. 9. But the design of them is, to excite us to pray more earnestly for the conversion and salvation of perishing sinners, which is highly acceptable in the sight of God.

Q. For whom do we pray in this Collect ?

A. For "all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics." The Jews were once the chosen people of God, distinguished from all other nations by their great privileges. It was only among them that God was truly known and worshipped, Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. For God showed "his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation : and as for his judgments, they have not known

them : " and from one of their tribes, Christ came to be " the glory of his people Israel," Luke 24. 32. But when he came, they rejected him ; they desired a great and mighty conqueror, and not a meek and lowly Saviour ; and therefore, they " denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go ; they denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them : and killed the Prince of Life," Acts iii. 13—15. For this cause the vengeance of God overtook them, according to our Saviour's own declaration, Luke xxi. 20—24 ; that " Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And before that very generation which crucified him was extinct, Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans, great numbers of the Jews were crucified, many more suffered the most aggravated calamities, the city was taken, the temple burnt ; and ever since, they have been scattered over the face of the earth, and the very name of a Jew is to this day held in universal reproach.—The Turks are a people who inhabit a large tract of country, where once the Christian religion flourished in all its purity : they follow a pretended prophet of their own, whose name was Mahomet, and who succeeded in establishing his religion by fire and sword ; consequently they are strangers and enemies to the Gospel of Christ.—Infidels, are those who disbelieve the revelation of God in his holy word : such are the heathen, who in various parts of the world worship wood and stone, the work of men's hands, cut into different figures ; or the sun and moon, beasts, birds, &c. and worse than these, are some, who, in our own and other Christian countries, believe neither in God nor a future state.—Heretics, are such as pretend to Christianity, but reject some of the most essential truths of the Gospel. as Arians, Socinians, and others of the like stamp, who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, the godhead and atonement of Christ, the godhead and influ-

ences of the Holy Ghost, the inspiration of the Scriptures, or any other essential point of the Christian faith: such fundamental errors as these, St. Peter calls "damnable heresies," and says, they who hold them shall "bring upon themselves swift destruction," 2 Pet. ii. 1; it is, therefore, a part of Christian charity to pray for the conversion of such persons, and of all others who are out of the way of salvation.

Q. What do we pray for them?

A. That God will "have mercy" upon them, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of his word," which are three great obstacles to their coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Q. In what does the "ignorance" of these people consist?

A. The Jews are ignorant of their own Scriptures. Moses, their great prophet, "wrote of Christ," John v. 45—47; and so did all their prophets, and David "in the Psalms," Luke xxiv. 44; but they did not, nor do they now see, that all these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; "their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament," 2 Cor. iii. 14. The case is the same with Turks, Infidels, and Heretics; they follow their own particular notions, because they are ignorant of the truth, and have no knowledge of Jesus Christ and his salvation.

Q. Will not their ignorance be an excuse for them?

A. So far from it, that ignorance is one of their sins, because they are "willingly ignorant," 2 Pet. iii. 5. When our Saviour came into the world, he said, that "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John iii. 19. If the Jews would impartially examine their own Scriptures, compare them with what is recorded of Jesus Christ, and, above all, pray constantly and heartily to God for Divine instruction, their ignorance would be removed. If the Turks would embrace the opportunities they have, by their

intercourse with Christian nations, of inquiring into the nature of Christ's religion, and comparing it with the corrupt system of Mahomet, with earnest prayer unto God to teach them the right way, their minds might be enlightened. If the heathen were to reflect upon the absurdity of imagining that a piece of wood or stone, carved in the likeness of a man, could be God ; or if they would consider the works of creation, and how infinitely superior that Being must be who made them all, they would renounce their errors ; " Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them ; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead ; so that they are without excuse," Rom. i. 19, 20. But what can be said of those infidels, who in a Christian country choose to disbelieve every thing against the clearest evidence ? Surely they are without excuse. The same observations will apply to the ignorance of heretics ; for if men will not make use of the means of information which God has given them, if they will not read his word, nor pray for Divine knowledge, it is no wonder if they continue in darkness ; and their ignorance is sinful.

Q. What are the other obstacles to the truth, that we pray God to take from them ?

A. " All hardness of heart and contempt of his word ;" which are greater hindrances in their way than ignorance ; for ignorance alone might be removed, but, alas ! it is strengthened by hardness of heart, which renders men stupid and insensible to the care of their souls. They are quick enough in their worldly concerns, but as to spiritual things, they have no relish for them ; and provided they can secure their interest in this world, they are contented to take their chance about eternity. This is called, " an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, hardened

through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. iii. 12, 13. There is, also, *contempt* of the word of God: many openly despise it, and others, even of those who are called Christians, are ashamed to be seen with a Bible in their hands, and laugh at those who read it, whilst, in their families and in company, every subject is talked of and listened to but religion: thus, while they are professing Christians, they are practical heathens. We pray, then, that God will of his great mercy take away their ignorance, by enlightening their minds by his Holy Spirit; that he will soften their hearts, and incline them to reverence his word, so as to hear it, read it, and walk according unto it, that they may be saved."

Q. What further do we pray that the Lord will do for their salvation?

A. We pray that the Lord will "so fetch them home to his flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord." Mankind are here compared to sheep which have left the fold and are gone astray; according to that of the prophet, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," Isa. liii. 6; which is also part of the general confession in our public service. It has been remarked, that sheep, when they go astray, never of themselves find the way back to the fold; so it is with man; and therefore we pray unto God to "fetch them home to his flock;" as, in the parable of the lost sheep, the owner is represented as going after the one that is lost, and bringing it home on his shoulders, Luke xv. 3—6; thus we pray, that God will have mercy on these "Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites;" that is, such as Nathanael was, of whom Christ said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile," John i. 47. They are called a remnant, because of the smallness of their number; as Isaiah said, "Except the Lord of hosts had left us

a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah," Isa. i. 9. Rom. ix. 27—29. And this remnant which shall be saved, together with believers of every nation, make up one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord; the "good shepherd," who as on this day "laid down his life for the sheep," and said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (that is, of the Jews): them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd," John x. 11, 15, 16.

Q. Have we any encouragement from the word of God, to pray for their conversion?

A. Yes, a great deal. Of the Jews, St. Paul says, "if they abide not still in unbelief, they shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again:" and again, that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, "There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins," Rom. xi. 23, 26, 27. And we hope the time is coming, when Mahometanism, heathenism, and infidelity, shall give way, and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. xi. 15. This is spoken of as the effect of the Redeemer's sufferings; for after David, speaking in the person of Christ, says, "they pierced my hands and my feet, &c. they parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture;" he says, "All the ends of the world shall remember, and be turned unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations," Psalm xxii. 16, 18, 27—32. Thus we are encouraged to hope for their salvation; and we should do all in our power to advance it, by supporting, according to

our ability, the pious endeavours of those who go forth with their lives in their hands, as missionaries to preach the Gospel to the heathen ; as well as others, who, with the same holy zeal, are labouring for the conversion of the Jews ; adding, above all, our hearty prayers for their success, through " Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen."

EASTER EVEN.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, so, by continually mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with him ; and that, through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection ; for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again, for us, thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What circumstances relating to our Saviour are we to consider on this day ?

A. Our church having led us through the whole of his passion, and brought us to view him expiring on the cross ; now calls upon us to attend him to the grave, and invites us to " come and see the place where the Lord lay," Matt. xxviii. 6. We learn from the Gospel for the day, that Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, went boldly to Pilate and requested his body, and that Pilate gave him leave. St. John informs us, that Nicodemus also, who came at first to Jesus by night, " brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight," John xix. 40, and joined with Joseph in the pious work of bury-

ing their Lord and Saviour. Then they took the body, wrapped it in fine linen, with the spices, and laid it in a new tomb cut out of a rock in the garden, where no man was ever laid before. Thus was fulfilled that prophecy of Christ, that "he made his grave with the rich in his death," Isa. liii. 9 : and it is to be observed, that both these honourable persons, who were before afraid to make an open profession of their attachment to Christ, now shook off their fears and boldly came forward, in the time of the greatest danger, when all his disciples forsook him and fled. The gospel informs us also of the vain attempt of the Jews in setting a guard to watch the sepulchre, as they said, lest his disciples should come and steal him away. But we are taught not merely to remember the burial of our Lord, but to consider that we have been "baptized into his death," and to pray, that, with him, we may be spiritually buried, and pass to a "joyful resurrection through his merits."

Q. What is the meaning of our being "baptized into the death" of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

A. In baptism, we profess not only to believe in his death, and rely upon it for the pardon of our sins, but also to be "made conformable unto it," Phil. iii. 10 ; and to be "planted in the likeness" of it, Rom. vi. 5 ; that as Christ died upon the cross for sin, so we engage by his grace to die to sin ; that "our old man" (that is, our evil nature) "shall be crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And therefore, says the Apostle, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death ? therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," Rom. vi. 3, 4, 6. Thus when we think upon our baptism, we should remember what a solemn engagement was made in our name ; and

especially if, by receiving Confirmation from the Bishop, we have given our own consent to what was promised for us in our baptism, we should remember that we then engaged to die unto sin, and to live unto God; and considering our own weakness, we should pray, as in the Collect, for his grace, that, "by continually mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with Christ," and so answer this important end of our baptism.

Q. What is meant by "continually mortifying our corrupt affections?"

A. Our affections are the desires of our souls, and are all *corrupt*: we do not naturally desire God and Christ, the communion of his Spirit, holiness, or heaven; but the world and its allurements, the flesh and its gratifications, to please ourselves, and to advance our own interest, pleasure, or reputation. Now we are called upon to bury these corrupt affections in the grave of our Saviour, by "mortifying" them; that is, by refusing to indulge them, by crossing our sinful inclinations, and having regard to the glory of God in all our actions, and, above all, praying unto him for his Spirit; for it is only "through the Spirit" that we can "mortify the deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13. And we pray in this Collect to do this *continually*, because as long as we live we shall have this evil nature within us, and therefore we must continually pray and strive against it, till we are delivered from it by death, and translated into a state of perfect holiness and perfect happiness.

Q. What is the end we pray for in mortifying our corrupt affections?

A. "That, through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection," through the merits of our Redeemer. Death is here compared to a gate, or door, which leads to some other place. To the wicked, who have despised their baptism, desired no interest in, or conformity to the death of Christ, and

have not mortified their corrupt affections, death will be the gate of hell, through which they will pass to everlasting misery: but to the righteous, who have been baptized into Christ's death, not merely by an outward profession, but by "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5; and, by mortifying their corrupt affections continually, have been buried with him; death will be the gate that opens into eternal life. And though to an eye of sense this gate looks only like the door of a dungeon or a tomb, yet they have no cause to fear it; for, to their comfort, they have to consider that Christ their Saviour passed through this gate himself, and not only overcame death, but as it were, sanctified the grave by his own body being laid therein. The soul of the Christian, as soon as ever it leaves the body, will be happy; and although the body will be reduced to dust, yet at the last day it shall be raised again, "and made like unto Christ's glorious body," re-united to the soul, and made happy for ever. This is the "joyful resurrection" which we pray that we may pass unto, and will be the happy lot of all Christ's people, who "have their conversation in heaven, from whence also they look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Q. On what account do we pray that we may "pass to a joyful resurrection?"

A. "For his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again, for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord." The mortification of our sins though indispensably necessary to our salvation, is in no wise our title to it, but the alone merits of our blessed Redeemer. It is for the merits of his death, whereby he made atonement for our sins: by the merits of his burial, by which he humbled himself so low as to be laid in the tomb;

and sanctified it for his people; and by the merits of his resurrection, whereby he has "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers," that we pray to "pass to our joyful resurrection," and if while striving by the grace of God to mortify "our corrupt affections," we are at the same time trusting only to our Saviour's merits, we may humbly hope that when we come to die, "the grave and gate of death" will be to us the entrance to eternal life. God grant it, for Christ's sake. Amen.

EASTER DAY.

ANTHEMS.

CHRIST our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast;

Not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

CHRIST being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin: but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. vi. 9—11.

CHRIST is risen from the dead: and become the first fruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death: by man came also the resurrection from the dead.

For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1 Cor. xv. 20.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost.

A. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. *Amen.*

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who, through thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life ; We humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect ; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. What is the meaning of this day, called “ Easter Day ? ”

A. It is the festival of Christ’s resurrection ; and was held in such high estimation in the Christian church as anciently to be called the Queen of Festivals : the churches were illuminated with a profusion of candles, and the day ushered in with every appearance of joy : the common salutation on this day, when one Christian met another, was, “ Christ is risen ; ” to which the person spoken to replied, “ Christ is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” Luke xxiv. 34.

Q. In what manner did Christ rise from the dead ?

A. Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, Christ arose triumphantly from the dead ; so that, when some of his disciples came to the sepulchre, they found nothing more than the grave clothes carefully laid together. The guard who were appointed to watch the tomb, could do nothing to oppose Christ’s resurrection, for “ there was a great earthquake, and

the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Matt. xxviii. 2—4. After this, Jesus "appeared first to Mary Magdalen:" Mark xvi. 9. he was also "seen of Cephas" (that is, Peter); "then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once:—after that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles:" 1 Cor. xv. 5—7: and he manifested himself to be the same Jesus which was crucified, by showing them the marks of the nails in his hands and his feet, and the print of the spear in his side: for when his disciples saw him, they were afraid, and thought him to have been a spirit; but he said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have:" and, to put the matter out of all doubt, he asked them if they had any meat, "and they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb; and he took it, and did eat before them." Luke xxiv. 36—43. Thus "he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts i. 3.

Q. What has Almighty God done for us by the resurrection of his "only begotten Son Jesus Christ?"

A. Through him he has "overcome death;" for "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him: for in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Rom. vi. 9, 10. When Christ died upon the cross, his enemies thought they had made an end of him, and he seemed to yield to the power of death: but it was by his death that he "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil," Heb. ii. 14, 15; and by his resurrection from the dead,

he showed that death had no power over him, and that it could not keep him one single moment in the grave longer than he pleased. God "loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Acts ii. 24. Besides this, he overcame death for his people; he took away its sting, and stripped it of its power; so that true Christians have now no reason to fear death, for "death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 54—57. Yea, they may now "desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Phil. i. 23.

Q. Does the Collect mention any other benefit from Christ's resurrection?

A. Yes; Thereby, Almighty God hath "opened unto us the gate of everlasting life." The resurrection of Christ is, as it were, the main hinge of the Gospel; and therefore the Apostles repeatedly declare that they were ordained to be witnesses of his resurrection: "Acts i. 22; for if Christ had not risen from the dead, the believer would have had no evidence that his sins were pardoned, nor would there have been any proof of our own resurrection; for "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." If Christ be not risen, then his Apostles would have been found "false witnesses," testifying a lie. "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ," (that is, died in his faith) "are perished;" because, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then there is no resurrection of the dead. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept; for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead: for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all," (that is, they that are Christ's, as the next verse explains it) "be made alive." 1 Cor.

xv. 12—23. Thus by the resurrection of Christ, “the gate of everlasting life is opened unto us, because thereby he was “declared to be the Son of God with power.” Rom. i. 4. All the prophecies respecting him, as well as his own declarations of rising again the third day from the dead, were accomplished; and thereby he proved, that he had made a sufficient atonement for sin, as well as the doctrine of the resurrection of our bodies: for after his resurrection “many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many;” Matt. xxvii. 52, 53; thereby proving “that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” Acts xxiv. 15. All true Christians then may say with the Apostle, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

Q. How does God “put into our minds good desires?”

A. By his “special grace preventing us.” In the Epistle, we are exhorted to “set our affections on things above,” as those who are partakers of Christ’s resurrection. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col. iii. 1, 2. In the Collect we are reminded that all spiritual affections, all good desires are from God, and are put into our minds by his special grace “preventing us;” that is, not merely *assisting* us, but *going before us*, for in us “dwelleth no good thing.” Rom. vii. 18. We have need to pray also for God’s special grace to check bad desires, which are the natural offspring of our hearts, as the Epistle teaches us, to “mortify our members which are upon the earth;

fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry : for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." Col. iii. 5, 6. Indeed, throughout the whole chapter the Apostle shows what are the good desires and good effects which should appear in those who are truly risen with Christ.

Q. How do we pray that we may bring the same to good effect?

A. By God's " continual help." Good desires are like blossoms upon a tree, which though very fine in appearance, will not satisfy the owner, because he expects at the proper season to find fruit ; so God does of his people : and therefore we must pray that he will carry on the work of grace in our hearts by enabling us to live a holy life, making it evident to all around us, by our constant care to walk in the commandments of God, that we are indeed risen with Christ ; and this we pray that he will do by his "*continual* help." It is he alone who can help us : and we ask for his help *continually*, because if he was to withhold his grace from us only for a single moment, that very moment we should fall into sin. Finally, we pray for these blessings " through Jesus Christ our Lord," whose resurrection from the dead we this day commemorate ; and who " liveth and reigneth," with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification ; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always

serve thee in pureness of living and truth ; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What has Almighty God, the " Father " of our Lord Jesus Christ, given his " only Son " to do for us ?

A. He gave him " to die for our sins," and by his death to make satisfaction for our sins, by which God was offended with us. When ye read the account of our Saviour's sufferings and death, we are apt to throw all the blame upon those who actually crucified him ; but we ourselves are guilty of it, for our sins were the occasion of his death : " He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5. We should learn then to hate sin, which appears so " exceeding sinful," (Rom. vii. 13.) as we would hate the sight of that weapon which slew our dearest friend and benefactor.

Q. For what other purpose did God the Father give his " only Son ?"

A. " To rise again for our justification." Rom. iv. 25. As when a man who owes a sum of money is thrown into prison till he pays it, if after a time we see the debtor set at liberty, it is an evidence that the creditor is satisfied, and the debt cancelled : so Christ was arrested for our debt, and thrown into the prison of the grave : if he had remained there, it would have been a proof that he had failed in making satisfaction for our sins ; but now that he hath burst the bars of death, and risen triumphant from the grave, it is a clear evidence that God's justice is completely satisfied, and that he has accepted of what his Son has done in our behalf ; and thus by Christ's resurrection, as it is the evidence of our reconciliation to God by the obedience and death of his Son, believers are justified.

Q. What do we pray unto God to grant us grace " to put away ?"

A. "The leaven of malice and wickedness;" this we were exhorted to do in the passages of Scripture before the Collect for last Sunday. Leaven was used among the Jews in making bread for the same purpose as yeast is among ourselves. Its property is to spread itself immediately through the whole mass. Malice, that is, bearing ill-will in the heart; and wickedness, meaning every kind of sin; are here compared to leaven, because, if these evil dispositions be in the heart, they will quickly spread themselves through the whole man, as leaven does in bread till the whole is leavened.

Q. For what end do we pray "to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness?"

A. We pray that we may so put it away "that we may always serve" God "in pureness of living and truth." First, we pray that we may serve God in "pureness of living;" putting away all uncleanness and intemperance, and avoiding the company of those who live in the practice of such vices. This is what St. Paul calls "the old leaven," and tells the Corinthians it was reported that there was fornication among them; alluding particularly to the case of a wicked professor of Christianity, whom they countenanced, instead of putting him away from their society; and therefore he says, "Your glorying is not good: know ye not, that a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth:" 1 Cor. v. 6—8. The second thing that we pray always to serve God in, is in "truth," or sincerity. This is what God particularly requires of us, for he is "a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John iv. 24.

Q. What is truth, or sincerity?

A. It consists principally in these two things ; that we aim at universal obedience, and that we do this from right motives. The Pharisees did a great many things which appeared pious and good ; but they were not sincere, for while they obeyed some of God's commandments, they neglected others ; and, as is usually the manner of hypocrites, they omitted things of the greatest importance, and did those of the least : thus they were very scrupulous in paying their tithes, even of herbs, which were not commanded by the law, but they omitted " judgment, mercy, and faith : " they carried a great external appearance of religion, fasting, and praying, and going to the temple of God ; but in their hearts they were full of all iniquity. Matt. xxiii. 23—28 : they pretended to be so conscientious, that it was not lawful for them to put the money which they had given to Judas into the treasury, because it was the price of blood ; but to bribe him to betray his innocent Master, and unjustly to put him to death, they made no scruple of whatever. Matt. xxvii. 6, 7. So, again, their motives were bad : not one of their works they did to glorify God, out of love to Christ, and through faith in him ; but to build up their own righteousness, and get the applause of men, Matt. xxiii. 5 ; and this made all their works abominable in the sight of God. To serve God in truth, then, we must be just the reverse of these characters : we must aim at obedience to all God's commandments, not thinking to compound with God by keeping some, and neglecting others ; but remembering that the same authority which enjoined one, enjoined them all ; and that to " offend in one point," is to break the whole law. James ij. 10, 11. Our obedience, to be sincere, must spring also from right motives : we must not think to be saved by it, or do it to get a good name amongst men, but out of love to God, faith in Christ, and a desire to promote his glory ; so shall we render an acceptable service to God : which we here pray that

we may do, " through the merits of the same, his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What has Almighty God given his only Son to be unto us?

A. First, " a sacrifice for sin," which has the same meaning as that in the last Collect, where we say he " died for our sins;" only in this he is called a " sacrifice."

Q. What is meant by a sacrifice?

A. It means, in general, any offering that is presented to God, but more particularly a bloody offering, which is the only sacrifice that can be available for sin, because " without shedding of blood, there is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. Sacrifices were offered very soon after the fall, for Abel " brought of the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof" as a sacrifice to God; Gen. iv. 4; and when God was pleased to give his Law to his people, a great variety of sacrifices were appointed, which were indeed of no value in themselves, but only as they represented Christ, who came into the world to " put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" for " Christ being come a high priest of good things

to come, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. ix. 11, 12, 26.

Q. What did "Almighty God" give his "only Son" to be unto us besides?

A. He gave him also to be an "ensample of godly life." As Christ is the only true sacrifice for sin, so he only hath set us a perfect example. We read of many good men in the holy Scriptures, but yet we cannot follow any of them in every thing, because they are but men, subject to the same infirmities as ourselves; and therefore St. Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ*;" 1 Cor. xi. 1; intimating, that he desired only to be followed so far as he followed his blessed Master: but Christ has set before us a perfect pattern for our imitation; for, as the Epistle for the day informs us, he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:" and he has offered up a perfect sacrifice, as the same Epistle teaches us that "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. ii. 21—24.

Q. What is the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, called in this Collect?

A. It is called "his inestimable benefit;" that is, a benefit so great that no sufficient estimate can be made of it. It will appear to be so, if we consider the value of this sacrifice. We usually estimate things by the price that they cost, and the more expensive they are, the greater we esteem them: but Christ, in giving himself for us, gave a sacrifice of more value than all worlds, inasmuch as he who created all things, is greater than the things that he has made. St. Peter tells us the value of this sacrifice, when he says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. i.

18, 19. Again, it is an inestimable benefit on account of the blessings we receive by it.—To have our sins pardoned, to be restored to the favour of God, and made his children by adoption; to be delivered from everlasting misery in hell, and brought to eternal happiness in heaven; all which believers receive through the sacrifice of Christ, shows it to be a benefit that cannot sufficiently be valued. It is also a benefit which none but Christ could have given unto us: “No man,” says the Psalmist, “can redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious; and it ceaseth for ever.” Psalm xlix. 7. 8.

Q. How do we pray to receive this inestimable benefit?

A. We pray that God will give us grace “always most thankfully to receive” it. Every blessing which God has given to us, demands our thanks; but this, as it is the greatest of all blessings calls for the warmest acknowledgments of praise: as our church expresses it in the General Thanksgiving in her public service; “We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine *inestimable love* in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.” We pray, also, that we may *always* receive it in this manner, because we always stand in need of it: there is not a day that we live without sin, and therefore we have reason to be thankful that this sacrifice is always ready, by which we may draw near to God. Our thankfulness for this “inestimable benefit” will be in proportion to what we feel of our need of it: a hungry man will be more grateful for food, or a sick man for health, than one who does not feel the want of these blessings; so, if we have but slight views of our own sinfulness, we shall but little esteem this “inestimable benefit;” but if we feel deeply our own misery, then, “our hearts will be unfeignedly thankful,” and

we shall pray, as the thanksgiving before mentioned teaches us, "that we may show forth the praises of God, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to his service, and by walking before him in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Q. How do we pray to follow the example which our Lord Jesus Christ has set before us?

A. That we may "daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life." But as Christ was not only man, but God, he did some things to manifest his Divine power, and others as Mediator, in which it would be the highest presumption in us to attempt to follow him: what therefore we are to follow in the life of Christ, is what he did as a mere man. which are the only "steps" in "his most holy life" that are left upon record for our imitation.

Q. What, then, are those "blessed steps" in the life of Christ which we pray to follow?

A. The first is, his early wisdom and piety. When he was only twelve years of age he was found in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." Young persons, then, should follow his example, by frequenting the house of God, to hear his word; and if they meet with any thing they do not understand, let them ask their parents, or other experienced persons, who, if they are really Christians, will not check them, but readily answer their inquiries, and be glad to see that they are seeking thus early after Divine truth. The next thing mentioned of our blessed Saviour, is his obedience to his parents: "He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them;" so children should be to their parents, after his example. Again, as he grew up, he "increased in wisdom, (as he did) in stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke ii. 46, 51, 52. Here also is a lesson to young persons, who very often grow wicked as they grow older; but

if they would learn of Christ, they must increase in wisdom and in grace. After this, we hear nothing more of our blessed Saviour till he was about thirty years of age, when he began to exercise his public ministry, where we may observe that he set us a pattern of every virtue. He lived a life of prayer to his heavenly Father ; and when he was so engaged in the day that he had no time for this duty, he spent whole nights in prayer to God. It was also " his custom " to attend the public ordinances of Divine worship. Luke iv. 16. He sought the glory of God in all that he did, and manifested the greatest submission to his will. He " went about doing good." Acts x. 38. He never spake an idle word, but always said something to edify and instruct his hearers : nor was he afraid to rebuke sin wheresoever he found it. He has taught us also, by his example, to live in obedience to the government of our country, to honour the king, and honestly to pay what is demanded of us for the support of the state, and to " render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's " as well as " unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii. 21. Christ also lived above the world : none of its riches, pleasures, or honours, influenced him : he was humble, patient, merciful, charitable : and in all these things we are called upon as Christians to follow his steps. In order to this, we must read and study his life, and so be, as it were, much in his company ; we must pray that we may love that holy example which he has set before us, and that, by the grace of God, we may " daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life ; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who showest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Q. What is meant by "being in error?"

A. The meaning of error, is, wandering out of the right path. There is but one way to heaven, which is Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6; but men mistake this way of salvation, and turn aside into forbidden paths, which lead to everlasting destruction. Error consists both in doctrine and practice. Error in doctrine, is denying any of the fundamental articles of our faith, and holding opinions contrary to the word of God. Error in practice, is living a wicked, unholy life, which seems principally intended in this Collect; and especially when bad men try to deceive themselves, by using false and specious arguments to justify their evil deeds.

Q. What is said in the Collect, of God's method of dealing with such persons?

A. He deals with them in a way of mercy, by showing unto them "the light of his truth." Those who are in error, are like persons who have lost their way in a dark night, and cannot regain the right path without a light to direct their way, or till the morning sun arises and dispels the darkness around them: the word of

God is the light of his truth, which he shows unto "them that are in error;" as David said of it, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths;" Psalm cxix. 105; and it directs them unto Christ, "the Sun of righteousness," Mal. iv. 2; who has declared himself to be "the light of the world;" and has said, "he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii. 12.

Q. For what purpose does God show to "them that be in error the light of his truth?"

A. "To the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness." If some benevolent person furnishes a light to a benighted traveller who has lost his way, it is evident that he does it to direct him into the right road: so God, in showing "to them that are in error the light of his truth," does it in order to bring them into the way that leads to everlasting life, which is here called "the way of righteousness," and is thus beautifully described by the Prophet, "There shall be a high way, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those:" (meaning the righteous) "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Isa. xxxv. 8.

Q. Who are they "that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion?"

A. In one sense, all who have been received into the church by baptism are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion; but as many of these persons when they grow up do in effect renounce their baptism, and live without any concern to serve Christ, or any knowledge of his religion, it means something more than this, and seems, from the latter part of the Collect, to intend those who make a visible profession of Christianity, acknowledge Christ as their Saviour, attend his ordinances and profess themselves to be his people.

Q. What do we pray that all they who are "ad-

mitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion may "eschew," or reject?

A. "Those things that are contrary to their profession." When they were admitted into the Christian church, they professed to "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." In the Epistle for the day, St. Peter particularly mentions the latter of these evil things, which are so contrary to our Christian profession, and says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." We pray, then, that they who make a profession of Christianity may have grace to act up to their engagements, by "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Titus ii. 12.

Q. What do we pray that they may follow?

A. "All such things as are agreeable" to the religion of Jesus Christ. Those who make a profession of Christianity, not only engage to renounce sin, but also to follow holiness; to "believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life." In the Epistle before mentioned, we are exhorted to particular duties; to integrity and uprightness in our dealings with the world, to submission and obedience to our rulers, to "honour all men, to love the brotherhood," (that is, believers, whom we should regard as brethren) to "fear God, and to honour the king," 1 Pet. ii. 11—17. In these, and in all other good works, they who profess the Gospel will adorn their Christian character, and walk agreeably to their holy profession, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise : that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Q. What is the description given in this Collect of mankind ?

A. They are described as sinners, and their " wills and affections " are said to be " unruly," that is, not under subjection to the law of God, Rom. viii. 7.

Q. How does it appear that the wills and affections of men are unruly ?

A. Daily experience proves them to be so, by the preference which men in general give to the things of this world, instead of spiritual things. Men do not choose God as their portion, his word as their rule, his ordinances as their delight, holiness as their aim, nor heaven as their home ; but these things are either neglected altogether, or made only secondary objects, whilst their worldly interest or pleasure is the principal thing that they seek after : this proves that their affections are unruly, because the will is governed by the affections : they love the world, and therefore they seek after it ; they have no great desire for spiritual blessings, and therefore they do not make them the object of their choice : they choose the evil, because they love it ; and refuse the good, because they have no relish for

it: and thus both their "wills and affections" are "unruly."

Q. Who can "order," or direct, the "wills and affections of sinful men?"

A. "Almighty God," and he "alone." No man is able to order the will and affections of another. A master may order his servants, or a king his subjects to do his commands, and be obeyed; but he has no access to their hearts, so as to govern their wills and affections. Nor can any man by his own power order his unruly will and affections: God alone, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, can do this; and his grace is *almighty* to subdue the most stubborn soul, and bend the "unruly wills and affections of sinful men" to his sovereign pleasure.

Q. How do we pray that God will order the wills and affections of his people?

A. We pray that he will order their affections, first, by granting unto them that "they may love the thing which he commands." All God's commandments are not only just and reasonable in themselves, but highly beneficial to us: "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," Rom. vii. 12. We pray, then, that God will so order the affections of his people, that they may see the reasonableness, the holiness, the equity, and the beneficial tendency of his commandments, and love them on that account; that they may say, with St. Paul, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," Rom. vii. 22; and with David, "I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold," Psalm cxix. 127. And then we pray that they may "desire that which God doth promise:" St. John informs us what it is; "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life," 1 John ii. 25; and this is contrasted at the close of the Collect with this present world, which men in general so eagerly desire. The world is full of manifold changes; there is no dependence to be placed on it; its "riches" are

“uncertain,” 1 Tim. vi. 17; its pleasures fleeting; its honours fade away: our health may soon be gone; our friends drop around us; and we ourselves must shortly change this world for eternity. But how different is that place which God has promised to his people! *There*, “true joys are to be found;” joys that satisfy the soul, and are substantial and everlasting: “In thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore,” Psalm xvi. 11. Amidst “the sundry and manifold changes of this world,” which the people of God are liable to, we pray that they may so desire the things which God hath promised, as to have their “hearts surely fixed” upon them: having that “hope, which is as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and entereth into that within the veil;” Heb. vi. 19; and then, like a ship at anchor, they will ride in safety through the tempestuous sea of this present life. In this Collect we only pray that God will order the *affections* of his people, by disposing their hearts to *love* his commandments, and *desire* his promises; because, if their affections are but rightly inclined, their wills will speedily follow; if they love God’s commandments, they will not fail to obey them: as David observed, saying, “My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. I have kept thy commandments, and thy testimonies, for all my ways are before thee,” Psalm cxix. 167, 168. And having their hearts surely fixed where true joys are to be found, they will “not be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,” Heb. vi. 12; which things we ask for them, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, from whom all good things do come ; Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same ; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Q. What do we acknowledge in this Collect as coming from God ?

A. "All good things;" as St. James observes, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," Jam. i. 17. All good things as to this life come from God ; our life, and health, and strength, are his gifts, and so are all things necessary for our support and comfort ; and therefore the Apostle said, that "the living God giveth us richly all things to enjoy," 1 Tim. vi. 17. But what is particularly meant here, is spiritual blessings, good things for our souls, all these likewise come from God ; for instance, pardon of sin is his gift, and so is repentance also, For Jesus is exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts v. 31. Grace to live a holy life, and faith, is not of ourselves, "it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 8, 9 : and eternal life, that good thing which believers are made partakers of, comes from God also, for "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 23.

Q. What good things do we pray God to grant to us, his "humble servants?"*

A. First, that by his "holy inspiration, we may *think* those things that be good." We pray that our hearts may be occupied with divine things; that we may think of God, his attributes and perfections; of Christ, his wonderful love in dying for us, and of the pattern which he hath left us for our imitation; of the Spirit, and his operations; of the word of God, his commandments, threatenings, and promises; and whatsoever, by dwelling upon our minds, will be likely to lead us forward in the ways of holiness. We pray, that we may think good thoughts, by God's "holy inspiration." Inspiration means breathing; and as God at the first gave natural life to man by "breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7; so in the same manner he communicates spiritual life, and puts good thoughts into the soul, by his Holy Spirit breathing upon it, as our Saviour did to his disciples, when "he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John xx. 22.

Q. What other good things do we pray that God will grant us?

A. That by his "merciful guiding we may perform the same." This Collect is the same in substance as that for Easter Day, in which we pray, that God, "by his special grace preventing us, will put into our minds good desires, and by his continual help will bring the same to good effect." In the Epistle for the day, we are exhorted to the performance of good works; to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only," lest we "deceive our own selves;" so to look into "the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, as not to be forgetful hearers, but doers of the word;" and, finally,

* See the Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent, where this expression, "thy humble servants," is explained.

to bridle our tongues, and attain that "pure religion, which is undefiled before God and the Father," and consists in visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and keeping ourselves "unspotted from the world," James i. 22—27. But this we can only do by God's "merciful guiding:" we pray, therefore, that he will be our guide, to lead us in the right way: and that he will guide us in *mercy*, that thereby we may be enabled to "perform the same:" and we ask these good things "through our Lord Jesus Christ," as he commands and encourages us to do, in the Gospel for this day, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," John xvi. 23, 24.

THE ASCENSION DAY.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. What do we believe of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ has "ascended into the heavens," or as it is expressed, "far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Eph.

iv. 10. Jesus after continuing forty days with his disciples from his resurrection, led them out from Jerusalem as far as Bethany, unto the Mount of Olives, and after promising the Holy Ghost unto them, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, "he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven," Luke xxiv. 50, 51. They saw him gradually ascending up, till at length "a cloud received him out of their sight," Acts i. 9.

Q. For what end did Christ ascend into heaven?

A. Christ, having finished the work which was given him to do, ascended to his heavenly Father, that he might be exalted. He is (says St. Peter) "by the right hand of God exalted." Acts ii. 33; and exalted as Mediator, to govern his church and people, and sit on his throne, "till his enemies are made his footstool." Psalm cx. 1. He ascended also for us: as the high priest, on the great day of atonement, went into the holy place with the blood of the sacrifices that had been offered, and sprinkled it before the mercy seat; so Christ, our great High Priest, after he had offered up himself a sacrifice for sin, "entered not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24. He ascended also to prepare a place for his people, as he told his disciples, saying, "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," John xiv. 2, 3:—And lastly he ascended to bestow blessings on his church, as the Psalmist testifies: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Psalm lxxviii. 18.

Q. What do we pray for as believing our Saviour's ascension?

A. We pray, "that like as we do believe" that he has "ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell." It is said of the disciples, that when they had seen their Lord carried up into heaven, "they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." Luke xxiv. 52, 53. They ascended in heart and mind with their blessed Master, and could not but long to be with him, that they might enjoy his company; and when they came down from the Mount of Olives, how little did they esteem all things here below. It is for this disposition of mind that we pray in the Collect. We have not indeed seen Christ ascend into heaven with our bodily eyes, but we believe that he is gone thither; and if we believe this, we should pray that we may "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;" that we may "set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth;" Col. iii. 1, 2—that we may sit loose to all things here below, contemplate the glory of Christ in his heavenly kingdom, and long to join in those songs of praise which are sung by saints and angels who surround his throne; and be prepared for that happy state, remembering that "this same Jesus, which was taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven;" Acts i. 11.—not to "mind earthly things," as those do "whose end is destruction," but that "our conversation may be in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;" Phil. iii. 19, 20;—that having in heart and mind ascended with him during our abode upon earth, we may at length ascend to him in our own persons, see him face to face, and "with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, the King of glory, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven ; We beseech thee leave us not comfortless, but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before ; who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Q. What is God the Father called in this Collect ?

A. "The King of glory."—Glory means brightness, such as appears in the sun when he shines forth in all his splendour ; and on this account heaven is called glory, because it is a place of such honour and majesty, that nothing expresses it more clearly to us, than that which appears most bright and glorious to our bodily eyes. This title, "the King of glory," belongs only to God ; for "who (saith the Psalmist) is this King of glory ? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." Psalm xxiv. 8—10. But in this Psalm the title is particularly applied to Christ, for he is "the King of glory," God equal with the Father.

Q. How has God the King of glory exalted his only Son Jesus Christ ?

A. He has "exalted him with great triumph unto his kingdom in heaven." Christ entered into heaven as the Son of God : its everlasting doors were commanded to open and give him admittance : "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ; and the king of glory shall come in." Psalm xxiv. 7—

9. He was attended by an innumerable company of

angels. When Elijah the prophet, a remarkable type of Christ, was taken up into heaven, "there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire," to convey him thither; 2 Kings ii. 11; but when Christ ascended into heaven, he was attended by the "chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: and the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." He also ascended as a mighty conqueror: "He led captivity captive," Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18; and manifested his victory over Satan, and the powers of darkness. He ascended too with the most joyful acclamations: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet," Psalm xlvii. 5. And thus Christ was exalted "with great triumph" into the kingdom of heaven.

Q. What do we ask of God in this Collect for ourselves who remain upon earth?

A. We pray that God will "not leave us comfortless, but send to us his Holy Ghost to comfort us." When our Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples that he was going to leave them, they were exceedingly distressed; but he said to them, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." John xiv. 16—18. It is for this gracious promise of Christ that we now pray. The Christian's comfort is in the consolations of God's Holy Spirit, and without him they are "comfortless." The world indeed knows nothing of this, but looks upon it as enthusiasm, for they cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because they neither see him nor know him; but true Christians "know him, for he dwelleth with them, and shall be in them." The Holy Spirit comforts the people of God, when they are cast down under a sense of guilt, by leading them to see that in Christ they have pardon and salvation. He comforts them in the use of

the means of grace, in public and private prayer, in hearing and reading the word of God, and in receiving the Lord's Supper, by quickening their hearts, and filling them "with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13. And he comforts them in all the trials, afflictions, and temptations which they meet with in the world, by the prospect of everlasting glory. St. Paul speaks of God as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. And again he says, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Q. What do we further pray for in this Collect?

A. That God will "exalt us to the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before," that is, to heaven, where Christ ascended in so triumphant a manner;—that there we may see his glory, sing his praises, and be made happy with him for evermore, "who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

WHITSUNDAY.

THE COLLECT.

GOD, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who

liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end.
Amen.

Q. Why is this day called Whitsunday?

A. This day, on which we commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, according to our Saviour's promise, was anciently called *Pentecost*, which is a word derived from the number *fifty*, on account of its being fifty days from Easter: the church appointed it as a special season for public baptism, on which occasion it was the custom for the baptized persons to wear white garments; from whence this day was called *White-Sunday*, and still retains its name with us, in short, *Whitsunday*. It is also so called Whitsunday from the divine light with which God was pleased "at this time," to "teach the hearts of his faithful people, by the sending to them the light of his Holy Spirit."—Of this divine light, and of the holiness consequent upon it, as also of the Saviour's righteousness with which his people are clothed, white garments are a significant emblem.

Q. In what manner did God send unto his "faithful people, the Light of his Holy Spirit?"

A. When they were all assembled together (as the Epistle for the day informs us) on a sudden there was a great sound heard from heaven, like "a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the house where they were sitting;" and there appeared the form of tongues of fire, cloven, or divided into parts, which descended upon the head of each of the disciples, as a representation of the gift of speaking divers languages which was then communicated unto them by the Holy Ghost, to enable them to preach the Gospel unto all the nations of the earth: for "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This astonishing gift was soon noised abroad, and as there were at that time a great

number of strangers in Jerusalem, "out of every nation under heaven," they all came together to learn the truth of the report, and were amazed to hear the Apostles, whom they knew to be natives of Galilee and unlettered men, speaking, in all the different languages of the countries where they were born, "the wonderful works of God." Acts ii. 1—11. Thus did Christ fulfil his promise of baptizing them "with the Holy Ghost." Acts i. 5.

Q. Was the gift of tongues the only one they were made partakers of, by the descent of the Holy Ghost?

A. No; God not only gave them the gift of tongues, but (as we learn from the Collect) he did also "at this time *teach the hearts* of his faithful people, by sending to them the light of his Holy Spirit." The disciples, notwithstanding the advantages they enjoyed of their Master's instructions, yet were a long time ignorant of many things; so that after his resurrection, when "he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart;" Mark xvi. 14; and even up to the time of his ascension, they seemed to expect that he was going to erect a temporal kingdom, when they said, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts i. 6; But now their hearts were so taught by the Holy Ghost, that when some, who heard the Apostles speak such a variety of languages, said, mocking, "these men are full of new wine," Peter stood up, with the eleven, and with the greatest courage and wisdom showed them how unlikely, as well as how wicked, such a charge was, it being but "the third hour of the day," that is nine o'clock in the morning; and then told them that this was spoken of long before by the prophet Joel, who prophesied that "in the last days," that is under the Gospel dispensation, "God would pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh;" and from thence he preached Christ unto them; and such was the effect of his sermon, that no less than about three thousand

persons were converted unto the faith; Acts ii. 13—41. so effectually did God “at this time teach the hearts of his faithful people, by sending unto them the light of his Holy Spirit.”

Q. May we expect the same operations of the Holy Ghost now, as took place on the day of Pentecost?

A. As to the gift of tongues, and other miraculous operations of the Holy Ghost, God has been pleased, for wise reasons, long since to discontinue them; for if miracles were always to continue, they would then cease to be thought miraculous: but the enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, are still the same; for we stand in as much need of them now, as the Apostles and early Christians did, and therefore our church teaches us, in the Collect for this day, to pray for them.

Q. What influences of the Holy Spirit do we pray for in this Collect?

A. We pray, first, for the *enlightening* influences of the Holy Ghost; “Grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a *right judgment* in all things.” We are by nature totally ignorant of divine truth; and therefore St. Paul calls the wisdom of God a mystery; but God reveals this mystery unto believers by his Spirit: for “the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 7—10. By him they are taught to know themselves, as guilty sinners before God; by him they learn the only way of salvation, through Jesus Christ; by him they are taught to know God as he has revealed himself to us in his holy word, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; by him their understandings are enlightened to understand the Scriptures; and by him they are guided “into all truth,” as our Saviour promised his disciples; John xvi. 13. We therefore pray, that “by the same Spirit we may have a right judgment in all things:”—that we may be kept from destructive errors, and brought to the knowledge of the truth, that our souls may be saved.

Q. What other influences of the Holy Ghost do we pray for?

A. We pray next for the *consolations* of the Holy Spirit, that we may “evermore *rejoice* in his holy comfort;” and this supposes his sanctifying influences, because there can be no such thing as an unholy person having the comforts of the Holy Ghost; and if such an one thinks that he has, he is deceiving himself, for “the kingdom of God is (*first*) righteousness and peace, and (*then*) joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rom. xiv. 17. But true Christians, whose minds are enlightened, and whose hearts are renewed by the Holy Spirit, and who make it evident that they are so by a holy life and conversation; as they pray for, so they may hope to receive his consolations, “through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with the Father, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.”

TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end.
Amen.

Q. What is the meaning of this day, called *Trinity* Sunday?

A. Our church having led us on in her Collects, to

consider our blessed Saviour's first and second advent; his wonderful incarnation; his circumcision; manifestation to the Gentiles; baptism, fasting and temptation; his bitter cross and passion; his burial; his glorious resurrection and ascension; and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his disciples; now calls upon us to consider the great and mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, or three Persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is true, we do this every day, when we meet together, throughout the whole of our service; but yet our church has thought fit to appoint this day, in which we may consider in an especial manner this great article, which is the very foundation of our religion.

Q. What is meant by acknowledging "the glory of the eternal Trinity?"

A. It is, first, to acknowledge the Godhead of each Divine Person in the sacred Trinity; that the Father is God; "One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him:" 1 Cor. viii. 6;—"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. iv. 6;—"That the Son also is God;—" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John i. 1;—"Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all," Acts x. 36; "and over all, God blessed for ever." Rom. ix. 5.—And that the Holy Ghost is God:—"Now the Lord is that Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 17; he is "the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14; he is every where present, as saith the Psalmist, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" Psalm cxxxix. 7; and lying unto the Holy Ghost, is lying unto God. Acts v. 3. 4. The Trinity is also called here eternal; "the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal." Further, "to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity," is to acknowledge the equality of the three Divine Persons in the Godhead; for "in this Trinity, none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are

co-eternal together, and co-equal." *Athan. Creed.* The Priests under the law acknowledged "the glory of the eternal Trinity" when pronouncing the blessing which God commanded them to use, they thrice repeated the sacred name Jehovah, saying, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Num. vi. 24—26. To which the Apostolick blessing answers; "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. For "in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal." *Athan. Creed.* And, "that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality." *Communion Service.*

Q. By what means do we acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity?

A. By the grace of God enabling us to make "confession of a true faith," as the Collect teaches us: "Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity." This is much to be observed, because there are some who speak lightly of faith, as if it were a matter of little or no importance; but if our faith be wrong, we cannot please God, for "without faith it is impossible to please him;" Heb. xi. 6; and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. xiv. 23. Now it is the part of true faith "to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity;" so that, whatsoever a man believes, if he does not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, his faith is not true, nor acceptable to God: and that is the reason why such stress is laid upon it in the Creed of St. Athanasius; "Whosoever will be saved, it is necessary before all things that he hold the catholic" (that is, the

universal) "faith;" and other sentences of the like nature, which, though some object to, yet they are not more positive than our Saviour's own words; "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned;" Mark xvi. 16. which plainly refers to belief in the Trinity, in whose name our Saviour commands his disciples to administer Christian baptism. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19. True faith, then, is the gift of God, and the work of his grace, by which his servants "believe with their hearts unto righteousness, and with their mouth make confession unto salvation." Rom. x. 10.

Q. What does "a true faith" acknowledging "the glory of the eternal Trinity" lead us to worship?

A. It leads us to worship the Trinity in Unity, or as the Collect expresses it, "in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity." The Unity, means the one God. Our Saviour said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Mark xii. 29. Deut. vi. 4. For although we believe that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, yet we must not suppose them to be three Gods, but three Persons subsisting in the Godhead. This, indeed, is a great mystery, too high for our weak understandings to conceive; but here reason must submit to faith, for we are assured it is so in the word of God. Our Saviour said, "I and my Father are one;" John x. 30: and again, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father:—I am in the Father and the Father in me." John xiv. 9, 10. And St. John says "There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 John v. 7. As God, therefore, gives his "servants grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity," so he enables them "in the power of the Divine Majesty to

worship the Unity : ” worshipping one only God, of infinite power, majesty, and glory, subsisting in three Divine Persons ; and three distinct Persons, of equal power, divinity, and majesty, in one almighty and everlasting God.

Q. What do we ask in the Collect of this “ Almighty and everlasting God ? ”

A. We besecch him to “ keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore to defend us from all adversities.” And we have great cause to adopt this prayer, considering to how many dangers our faith is exposed. Satan, the great enemy of our souls, is ever upon the watch to overthrow our faith. Infidelity and false doctrine continually surround us, and our minds are too much disposed to unbelieving doubts and vain reasonings, instead of implicitly submitting ourselves to the revealed will of God. We pray, therefore, that God will “ keep us stedfast ” in the true faith, and not suffer us to fall into error ; that he will keep us from carnal reasonings and vain speculations about what is so infinitely above our comprehension, and enable us stedfastly to believe what he has revealed of himself in his holy word, knowing that God is best acquainted with his own nature, and that what he has declared of it in the Scriptures is the word of Him “ who cannot lie : ” Tit. i. 2 : so shall we be kept stedfast in the faith, and evermore be defended from all adversities.

Q. To whom do we address this prayer ?

A. To the “ eternal Trinity,” the “ Almighty and everlasting God ” in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and therefore we conclude it thus, “ who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.”

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Q. Of whom is God the strength?

A. "Of all them that put their trust" in him. Trust in God is a duty frequently inculcated in the holy Scriptures. We are directed to trust in him "with all our hearts," Prov. iii. 5. and "at all times." Psalm lxii. 8.—To trust him for all things necessary for this life, Matt. vi. 25, 31, 32. and especially to trust him for the things which concern our salvation; for mercy, through Christ, to pardon our sins, and for grace to help us in time of need. Indeed, there is nothing but God in which we can safely trust. We cannot trust in ourselves; and if we do, we shall be sure to fall. 2 Cor. i. 9. nor can we trust in others; our friends may fail us, Micah vii. 5, 7. and even in the greatest of men, in princes, the Psalmist tells us "there is no help," Psalm cxlvi. 3: but "it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man: it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes." Psalm cxviii. 8, 9. God has also pronounced a curse upon him "that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord;" but a blessing upon "the man that trusteth in the Lord. and whose hope the Lord is." Jer. xvii. 5, 8.

Q. How is God "the strength of all them that put their trust in him?"

A. He helps them in all their trials and temptations, either by supporting them in, or delivering them out of, their troubles, as shall be most for his glory and their real good. Thus God supported David, and others of his people mentioned in the Old Testament; and St. Paul, and the rest of the Apostles recorded in the Gospel. And he is still the same to all that put their trust in him, even to the meanest and most distressed of his people: for God has been "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress." Isa. xxv. 4. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Isa. xxvi. 4.

Q. What do we ask of God in this Collect?

A. First, that he will "mercifully accept our prayers." Having considered that God is the strength of all that trust in him, we now beseech him to strengthen us, and that in his great mercy he will hear and answer the prayers which we now offer up to him for that purpose. (See the Collect for the First Sunday after the Epiphany.)

Q. Why do we pray to God to *strengthen* us?

A. "Because, through the *weakness* of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without him." Our church often puts us in mind of this great truth, the weakness and insufficiency, as well as the corruption and depravity, of our mortal nature. Thus in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, we confess that "by reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright." In that for the Second Sunday in Lent, that "we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves;" and in this, that our nature is "mortal," and "weak:" such is the weakness of it, that we can do no good thing without God. St. Paul made the same confession when he said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Rom. vii. 18.

Q. In what manner do we pray to God to strengthen us?

A. We pray that he will “grant us the help of *his* grace;” that is, that he will be pleased to give us such Divine strength and power from above, as will be sufficient to counteract “the weakness of our mortal nature.” Thus when St. Paul prayed that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, the Lord answered him, saying, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Cor. xii. 9.—which all those who put their trust in God shall find, when they feel their own weakness, and pray unto him to strengthen them by his grace.

Q. For what purpose do we ask God to grant us “the help of his grace?”

A. “That in keeping *his* commandments we may please *him*, both in will and deed.” Thus St. John observes, that to “keep his commandments,” is to “do those things that are pleasing in his sight;” and then comprises the commandments under these two heads. “That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” 1 John iii. 22, 23. It is impossible to please God without keeping his commandments. We know that even amongst men, if a parent has an undutiful child, or a master a disobedient servant, they are justly displeased: and how much more is this the case between God and man! “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if, then, I be a father, where is my honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts?” Mal. i. 6. It is for this purpose, then, that we pray for the help of God’s grace, that we may “keep his commandments;” and so “please him both in will and deed:” in will, by loving what he commands; and in deed, by practising it: “through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy stedfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. Whom does the Lord never fail "to help and govern?"

A. "Those whom he brings up in his stedfast fear and love." To *fear* God is to have a reverential awe of his Majesty, to be afraid to sin against him; thus Joseph feared God, when he said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!" Gen. xxxix. 9. It is also to believe and fear his threatenings against sinners, and fly for refuge to the cross of Christ; as Noah, who "by faith, being warned of God," was "moved with fear, and prepared an ark" (a remarkable type of Christ) "to the saving of his house." Heb. xi. 7. And, moreover, to fear God, is to have an eye to him continually, to consider him as ever present with us, and resolve to obey him whatsoever it may cost us: thus Moses "feared not the wrath of the king" (of Egypt) "for he endured as seeing him who is invisible;" Heb. xi. 27; and the apostles determined "to obey God rather than man." Acts v. 29. To *love* God, is to set our affections upon him as our chief good; to delight in his word and ordinances; to have our minds fixed upon Christ, and his salvation; and to make it evident that we do indeed love God, by keeping his commandments, and loving his people; as the Epistle for the day instructs us. The fear and love

of God always go together, as the Psalmist observed, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments." Psalm cxii. 1. These graces are the work of God's Holy Spirit in the hearts of his people : they cannot of themselves either fear God or love him, but, as the Collect says, he *brings them up* in it ; and thus the Apostle says, " Let us have *grace*, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear ;" Heb. xii. 28 ; and St. John says, " We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19. God brings them up in his "*stedfast* fear and love : " having implanted these graces in their hearts, he enables them to cleave unto him even unto the end ; as St. Paul told the Philippians : " Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. i. 6.

Q. What is it that God does for them whom he brings up in his stedfast fear and love ?

A. He " never fails to help and govern them." He *helps* them by giving them fresh measures of grace and strength, that they may fear him and love him more and more ; and " grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18. He helps them also in all their trials and difficulties, as was observed in the last Collect. He also *governs* them : He is not only their Saviour, but their King, and rules in their hearts by his Holy Spirit. He directs their way, and makes the path of duty plain before them : nor does he *ever fail* to do this, but as he hath promised, so he will certainly perform.

Q. What do we pray that God will do for us ?

A. We pray first that he will " keep us under the protection of *his* good providence." The providence of God is that wise method by which he governs the world, and disposes of all events in it. There is no such thing as chance, or accident, but whatever takes place is ordered and directed by God. Our Saviour told his

disciples that God's providence extends even to the least of his works, so that a sparrow could not fall without his permission, and that even the very hairs of their heads were all numbered," Luke xii. 7, 8. It is here called his *good* providence, for all God's dispensations are good in themselves, and designed for good to his people. Whether he sends prosperity or affliction, health or sickness, gain or loss, they are all good, as coming from his hand who can do no evil. Job was so sensible of this, that he submitted to the afflictive dispensations of God's providence, and said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job. i. 21. We pray, then, to be kept "under the protection of God's good providence;"—that he will be pleased to take our affairs into his hands, and manage them as shall be most for his glory and our real good.

Q. What else do we pray for in this Collect?

A. We pray that God will "make us to have a perpetual fear and love of his holy name." We have considered, in the beginning of this Collect, what it is to fear and to love God, and that God alone can enable us to do it: now we pray that he will give us these graces; that he will "make us to have a perpetual fear and love of his holy name." The "name" of God signifies his perfections and attributes, by which he is made known to us; and it has also a particular reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, because it is by him that we know God; "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John i. 18. In his holy name, therefore, we ask these blessings of God, and pray that we may be kept "under the protection of his good providence," and fear and love him perpetually.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us ; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given a hearty desire to pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we ask of God in this Collect ?

A. We beseech him "mercifully to hear us." It is a petition that we are often called upon to present to the throne of grace, and in it we desire that our prayers may be acceptable in the sight of God, and bring down answers of mercy,

Q. What do we here acknowledge as the gift of God ?

A. We confess that a hearty desire to pray "is his gift. By nature we have no earnest desires towards God ; we do not feel our need of spiritual blessings, and therefore we are not solicitous for them. But those desires of the heart which are acceptable to God, are his gift : "for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26. God will not fail to hear and answer in mercy our hearty desires to pray, as St. James observes, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James v. 16.

Q. What do we pray for besides ?

A. That by God's "mighty aid we may be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities." We have set before us, in several of the Collects, the dangers to which we are exposed, both as to our bodies and souls ; the temptations we meet with from the world, and our own corrupt hearts, as well as the assaults of Satan, the

great enemy of our souls. The last of these is particularly mentioned in the Epistle for this day; "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. And in the next verse the Apostle speaks of adversity, or affliction; "knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren, that are in the world." In all these "dangers and adversities" we pray that God will defend and comfort us: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." 1 Pet. v. 10. In danger we stand in need of defence; and in affliction, of comfort: we pray therefore that we may have both by God's mighty aid. His power is almighty: there are no dangers so great, but the Lord can defend us from them; nor any adversities but what he can comfort us in; and therefore St. Paul, in his afflictions which he endured for the cause of Christ, speaks of God as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. Finally, we ask these blessings, "through Jesus Christ our Lord;" for whose sake alone, God will by his mighty aid defend and comfort us.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy,

that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord.
Amen.

Q. What do we acknowledge of God, in this Collect?

A. First, that he is "the protector of all that trust" in him; which has much the same meaning as what was observed in the Collect for the first Sunday after Trinity, that he is the "strength of all them that put their trust in him." We acknowledge, secondly, that without him "nothing is strong, nothing is holy." Without God, nothing is *strong*. All our bodily strength comes from him; but when he pleases to lay his hand upon us, the greatest strength will be soon turned into weakness. Our souls also have no strength of their own; we cannot of ourselves resist one temptation, nor perform one duty aright; we have no power to do one good work, nor even to think a good thought: but all "our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. iii. 5. Again, without him nothing is *holy*. We have no holiness of our own, for "what is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" Job. xv. 14—16.

Q. What do we here ask of God?

A. We beseech him to "increase and multiply upon us his mercy." This petition is very proper after the confession we have made of our weakness and unholiness. We have increased and multiplied our sins against God: we have not only sinned once or twice, but repeatedly; nay, our sins "are more than the hairs of our heads." Psalm xl. 12. We have great need, then, to pray unto God, that he will "increase and multiply

upon us his mercy;" as David did when he considered his own sinfulness: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Psalm li. 1: that "where sin hath abounded, grace might much more abound." Rom. v. 20.

Q. For what end do we pray that God will "increase and multiply upon us his mercy?"

A. "That he being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal." Things temporal relate to this life only; they are called *temporal*, that is, things of *time*, because once they had no existence, and hereafter they shall be no more. Things eternal relate to a future state of happiness or misery. Heaven is eternal; there the righteous "shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xxii. 5. Hell is also eternal: there the wicked "shall go into everlasting punishment." Matt. xxv. 46. We are all passing through the things of time, and hasting towards eternity; every day brings us nearer to it; nor can we tell how soon we may have done with all things here below, and be called to enter the eternal world. In this passage from time to eternity, we pray that God will be "our ruler and guide;" that he will govern and direct us "so to pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal;" which he does by giving us a realizing view of eternity, convincing us of its importance, and enabling us to make all our pursuits upon earth subservient to the great object of getting to heaven. Worldly men act just the reverse: their leading design is to obtain temporal things, and their great concern to follow their worldly interest, which is the reason why they finally lose eternal happiness, and make such a miserable exchange. If, then, we would be made partakers of everlasting life, we must pray for grace to keep it continually in view, and to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are tempo-

ral, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. iv. 18. "Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is meant by "the course of this world?"

A. In Ephesians ii. 2, it is put for the corrupt ways of worldly men; who are said to walk "according to the course of this world;" but here it means the various events which are continually taking place in the earth, both with respect to nations and individuals.

Q. How do we pray that these may be "ordered?"

A. "Peaceably, by God's governance." Although men plan and direct the various affairs of the world according to their own will, yet they do in effect but promote the designs of God, for he is the Supreme Governor of the world, and over-rules all events just as he pleases: and notwithstanding wicked tyrants, like Pharaoh of old, endeavour to oppose God, yet by his providence over-ruling them, they do but fulfil his sovereign pleasure. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of

the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?" Dan. iv. 34, 35. We pray, therefore, that God the Supreme Governor, will order " the course of this world peaceably ;" that he will be pleased in his own good time to put a stop to all war and bloodshed, and especially to persecution on account of religion ; that he will prevent all civil commotions and rebellions ; and incline the hearts of men to live in obedience to their rulers, and of nations to seek peace and friendship one with another.

Q. Why do we pray that " the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by God's governance ?"

A. " That his church may joyfully serve him in all godly quietness ;" like what is said in the Acts of the Apostles, " Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified ; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied," Acts ix. 31. When God is pleased to give his church a time of rest, we are called to be *joyful* ; to serve him with thankful hearts, and to bless his name that he has been pleased so to favour us as that we may openly profess his religion, without being exposed to those severe trials and persecutions, which his servants in former ages were called to endure. But we are also to " serve him in all *godly* quietness ;" not to grow cold and formal, careless and lukewarm, as was the case with the church of Laodicea, (Rev. iii. 15.) lest we provoke God to visit us with heavy judgments and afflictions, or, what is still more awful, to remove the light of his Gospel from us. We must pray, therefore, that we may abound in good works, as the Epistle for the day teaches us ; that we may " be all of one mind, having compassion one of another ;" that we may " love as brethren, and be pitiful and courteous : not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing ; but, contrariwise, blessing ;" that we may " refrain our tongues from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile ;" that we may " eschew

evil, and do good ; seek peace and ensue it ;” and if we should be called to “ suffer for righteousness’ sake,” to esteem ourselves happy, and not to be afraid of those who ridicule or oppose us, “ but sanctify the Lord God in our hearts,” 1 Pet. iii. 8—15 ; and thus “ joyfully serve God in all godly quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good things as pass man’s understanding ; Pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What has God “ prepared for them that love” him ?

A. “ Such good things as pass man’s understanding :” they are so great and glorious, that the highest ideas that we are able to form of them, will come infinitely below what they really are. “ As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ;” 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. and therefore, though we cannot fully describe them, we may yet form some idea of their nature, according to the revelation which God has been pleased to give us. God has prepared many “ good things” in this life “ for them that love him.” He gives them spiritual wisdom, and leads them into all truth by his Holy Spirit, which is

mentioned in the chapter from whence the beginning of the Collect is taken ; “ not the wisdom of this world,” but “ the wisdom of God.” And again : “ We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” And again : “ We have the mind of Christ.” 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 12, 16. God has promised also, that “ all things shall work together for good to them that love him ;” Rom. viii. 28 ; that he will shew “ mercy unto thousands of them that love him,” Exod. xx. 6 ; and preserve them, Psalm cxlv. 20. And, finally, he “ hath promised to them that love him, the crown of life.” Jam. i. 12 ; and prepared a place of inconceivable happiness for them : “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matt. xxv. 34. These are some of the “ good things which God has prepared for them that love him,” which do indeed “ pass man’s understanding.”

Q. How do we pray that we may obtain the love of God ?

A. God only can communicate it unto us ; and therefore we pray that he will “ pour it into our hearts :” for “ love is of God ; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God,” 1 John iv. 7. And St. Paul says, “ the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.” Rom. v. 5.

Q. What is that love which we here pray God to pour into our hearts ?

A. It is “ such love toward God that we may love him above all things.” This is what the Lord requires of us ; “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” Matt. xxii. 37, 38. If we suppose that God may be loved in the second place, whilst our affections are fixed chiefly on the world, it is plain we do not love God at all ; for “ if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not

in him." 1 John ii. 15. God is a jealous God ; he demands the whole heart, and will be loved supremely above all things whatsoever : we pray, therefore, that he will "pour into our hearts *such* love toward him, that we may love him above all things."

Q. Why do we pray that God will pour such love into our hearts ?

A. "That we loving him above all things, may obtain his promises." The promises of God are made only "to them that love him." Jam. i. 12. It is for them that he has "prepared such good things as pass man's understanding ;" but to those who do not love God, there is nothing but the most awful threatenings. He "repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them : He will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." Deut. vii. 10. "If any man" (says St. Paul) "love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha," (that is, let him be accursed when the Lord cometh) 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Q. What is here said of God's promises ?

A. That they "exceed all that we can desire." They are far superior to any thing here below ; for whatever earthly things men have, they still want something more ; and most commonly, the more they have the more they desire : but as the promises of God "pass man's understanding," so likewise they "exceed all that we can desire ;" and therefore David said, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Psalm xvii. 15. These blessings we pray for, together with the love of God, which leads to them, "through Jesus Christ our Lord : " in whom "all the promises of God are yea and amen," 2 Cor. i. 20—sure and stedfast for evermore.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

LORD of all power and might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things ; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. How do we address God in this Collect ?

A. First, as the "Lord of all power and might." "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords ; a great God, a mighty, and a terrible." Deut. x. 17. "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this ; that power belongeth unto God." Psalm lxii. 11.

Q. What is God "the Author and Giver of?"

A. "Of all good things." He is the *Author*, that is, the First Cause of all good things : the Author of every blessing that we have or can enjoy : "for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Rom. xi. 36. He is the source of all good things, both for our bodies and souls. He is likewise the *Giver* of all good things : as he made them, so he dispenses them with a liberal hand to supply the wants of his people. "From him all good things do come ;" (Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter :) "He openeth his hand, and we are filled with good." Psalm civ. 28.

Q. What "good things" do we pray for in this Collect ?

A. Spiritual good things ; the first of which is, that God will "graft in our hearts the love of his Name." It is an idea taken from a tree, which by nature is wild, and bears nothing but sour fruit ; but when the gardener grafts into it the branch of a good tree, it bears fruit

that is pleasant to the taste, and good for food. So it is with us : by nature we not only bring forth no fruits of righteousness, but bad fruit, or, as the Lord says by his prophet, "wild grapes." Isa. v. 2. We pray, therefore, that God will "graft in our hearts the love of his Name;" that having this divine principle implanted within us, we may "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," Matt. iii. 8; and "be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." Phil. i. 11.

Q. What is the next petition we ask in this Collect ?

A. "Increase in us true religion." "Herein," said our Saviour, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples," John xv. 8. There is no standing still in the divine life; for if we do not go forward and advance in true religion, we shall go back; and therefore we must continually pray that God, who alone can give us true religion, by "grafting in our hearts the love of his Name," will daily cause it to increase in us; as the apostles did when they "said unto the Lord, Increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5; and as St. Paul prayed for the Colossians, "that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that they might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Col. i. 9, 10.

Q. What do we pray for besides ?

A. That God will "nourish us with all goodness." As a tree cannot bear fruit except it receive the warmth of the sun, and is nourished by refreshing showers; or as our bodies can neither live nor grow, unless they are nourished with proper food: no more can our souls, except they are nourished by Divine grace. For this purpose, we must make use of the appointed means: we must read the word of God, and hear it where it is faithfully preached, "that we may grow thereby;" 1 Pet. ii. 2: we must wait diligently upon God in all

those ways which he has commanded us, for "they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength." Isaiah xl. 31. We must pray that he will "nourish us with all goodness," by his Holy Spirit; as St. Paul says of Timothy, that he was "nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto he had attained." 1 Tim. iv. 6.

Q. What farther do we pray for?

A. We pray, that God will of his "great mercy keep us in the same." The Scriptures are full of cautions against falling away: we read of some who appeared to be true believers, but after a while, went back again into the world; and the latter end of such persons, is worse than the beginning, "for it had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness. than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. That this may not be our own case, we must pray for perseverance; for "if we continue in the word of Christ, then are we his disciples indeed;" John viii. 31; and "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matt. xxiv. 13. We must pray, that God will not only "graft in our hearts the love of his Name, increase in us true religion, and nourish us with all goodness;" but that he will also of his "great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" that we may "abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming," 1 John ii. 28.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; We humbly

beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us ; through Jêsus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Q. What is here said of God's providence ?

A. It is called his "never-failing providence," which "ordereth all things both in heaven and earth." God orders all things *in heaven* whether intelligent beings, as the angels ; or things inanimate, as the sun, moon, and stars, which he has created. He orders all things *in earth* from the meanest insect to the greatest monarch, and overrules all events according to his sovereign will and pleasure. In the Collect for the second Sunday after Trinity, this is called God's "good providence;" and here, his "never-failing providence;" because God's providence is always the same, and there never was a time, nor ever shall be, that the providence of God did not order and direct all things, both in heaven and in earth. "The most high God is the possessor of heaven and earth;" Gen. xiv. 22; and whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places." Psalm cxxxv. 6.

Q. What do we pray for with respect to the providence of God ?

A. First, we humbly beseech him "to put away from us all hurtful things," and then "to give us those things which be profitable for us." Here is no mention made of particulars, because we do not know what will be hurtful to us, or good for us, but we leave the matter to the providence of God, who perfectly knows what will be for our good, humbly beseeching him to lead us into that way of life, which may most further the salvation of our souls. This is the meaning of the prayer, "put away from us all hurtful things, and give us those things which be profitable for us:" because

things that will not benefit our souls, will be of no real profit to us, as our Saviour has taught us, saying, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. xvi. 26. It is very possible, that in beseeching God to "put away from us all hurtful things," we are praying that he will put away from us riches, honours, worldly ease, and prosperity; and that in asking him to "give us those things which be profitable for us," we are praying for afflictions, crosses, and trials of various kinds: but if the one will be really hurtful, and the other good for our souls, we must not mind this; but consider that salvation is our great concern, and that they, who, like the rich man in the Gospel, are "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day," Luke xvi. 19, are not to be envied, if, after all, they go to the place of torment; nor are the poor any thing the worse off, though reduced to the lowest state of wretchedness in this life, if, when they die, they are carried into Abraham's bosom. Not that we are to suppose that riches are bad in themselves, for, if rightly employed, they will promote the glory of God, and the good of mankind: but if God sees them to be hurtful for us, we should not desire them; but pray, as in the Collect, that he will put "away from us all hurtful things," whatsoever they may be; and give us those things which he, in his infinite wisdom, knows will be really profitable for us, and most conducive to the good of our immortal souls: "through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit to think and do always such things as be right-

ful ; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we pray the Lord to grant to us ?

A. "The Spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful." By this expression, "the Spirit," may be understood in one sense, a disposition of mind "to think and do always such things as be rightful." Not like the unjust steward mentioned in the Gospel for this day, who, having wasted his master's goods, and being called to account for it, sat down and invented a plan to cheat his master still farther, and was commended, not for his dishonesty, but for his policy, in finding means to provide for himself, after his Lord had dismissed him from his service. Nor like the Israelites spoken of in the Epistle, who "lusted after evil things" and with whom "God was not well pleased." But we pray that our hearts may be always so rightly disposed by divine grace that we may both think and act according to those principles of righteousness and true holiness, which God has laid down in his holy word. And because we can neither think nor do at any time "such things as be rightful" without the Holy Spirit's influence in our hearts, working within us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" Phil. ii. 13. in praying for "the Spirit," we ask not only for a right disposition of mind, but that the Spirit of God may be given to us to produce within us that right and holy disposition.

Q. What do we acknowledge that we cannot do without God ? .

A. Not "any thing that is good." So our blessed Saviour told his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." John xv. 5. And so they have found and acknowledged in all ages of the church. This truth is repeatedly made the subject of our humble confessions.

“By reason of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright.” Collect for the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.—“We have no power of ourselves to help ourselves.” Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent.—“Through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee.” Collect for the first Sunday after Trinity. These repeated confessions of our inability either to think or do any good thing of ourselves should not be overlooked.

Q. What do we pray for “as feeling that we cannot do any thing that is good without God?”

A. We pray that by him “we may be enabled to live according to his will.” The *will* of God means, what he would have us to do, for this is the will of God, even your sanctification.” 1 Thes. iv. 3; or, as was observed at the beginning of this Collect, “to think and to do always such things as be rightful;” and though we cannot do the will of God, nor any good thing *without him*, yet *by him*, that is, if we have his Spirit dwelling within us, we shall certainly “be enabled to live according to his will,” as St. Paul testified, saying, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil. iv. 13. For this we pray “through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

LET thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as please thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is the first thing that we pray for in this Collect?

A. That God will lend a merciful ear to our prayers. "Let thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants." Indeed if it was not for God's mercy in Christ we could have no hope of our prayers being accepted. We pray therefore that God will so hear our prayers as to accept and answer them in mercy. God indeed hears all things, not only the prayers of his people, but the language of his enemies; though "they say, 'The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.'" But "understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" Psalm xciv. 7—9. But, although God hears all things, yet he does not regard nor answer all the petitions that are offered unto him; and the prophet Isaiah shows the reason: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Isa. lix. 1, 2. And St. James says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James iv. 3.

Q. What do we pray that the Lord will do for them that they may obtain their petitions?

A. That he will "make them to ask such things as please him." For this purpose we must endeavour to frame our petitions according to the pattern of the holy Scriptures, and particularly after that perfect model which our Saviour has left us, and which we call "the Lord's Prayer;" wherein we are taught, before we ask any thing for ourselves, to pray for the glory of God, that his "name" may be "hallowed," and "his will done upon earth, as it is done in heaven." We are taught, in the next place, to ask only for necessary things, not for luxuries, nor any thing to please our

carnal desires ; but for our “ daily bread,” for the pardon of our sins, to be kept out of “ temptation,” and delivered “ from evil ;” ascribing unto God “ the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.” Matt. vi. 9—13. This is the pattern which our blessed Lord has given us, both as a form to be said, and as a model for our imitation ; and when we pray for such things as these, we are asking for that which pleases God, and may hope that his “ merciful ears will be open to our prayers.” For “ this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us : and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” 1 John v. 14, 15. And that we may “ ask such things as please God,” we must pray that he will “ make us ” to do it, by giving us his Holy Spirit, to open our understandings to pray aright, and incline our hearts to desire such things as are pleasing to him, “ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” Eph. vi. 18 ; “ praying in the Holy Ghost,” Jude 20 : by whom alone we can pray acceptably, and “ whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Rom. viii. 15. Finally, “ to ask such things as please God,” we must be sure to ask them “ through Jesus Christ our Lord,” not merely as words of course, but so as to rely upon his merits for the obtaining of our petitions ; and then our Saviour has promised that we shall have them : “ Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.” John xiv. 13, 14, and xvi. 23.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, who declarest thy almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity ; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy grace, that we running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of thy heavenly treasure ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. How does God most chiefly declare his “ almighty power ? ”

A. “ In shewing mercy and pity.” This appears from his usual method of dealing with his creatures. It is true, he has declared his almighty power in executing vengeance upon his enemies, as in the case of the angels that sinned, the destruction of the world by a flood, the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and various other examples mentioned in the Scriptures ; but yet mercy is his chief delight, and he manifests his almighty power principally in the exercise of it to the sons of men. This appears most of all from God’s wonderful compassion in giving his own Son to die for a guilty world, when he might justly have condemned us to everlasting misery ; and from all the blessings, temporal as well as spiritual, bestowed upon mankind for his sake. God declares his mercy to the wicked, by his wonderful patience and forbearance, notwithstanding their provocations : thus he did to those who lived before the flood, “ when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing ; ” 1 Pet. iii. 20 ; and he exercises the same patience and long-suffering to sinners now, “ for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great

kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Joel ii. 13. He declares his mercy to the humble penitent, as recorded in the Gospel for this day; where the publican who came to the temple of God with true repentance, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner, went down to his house justified," while the proud Pharisee was rejected. Luke xviii. 13, 14. Thus God "declares his almighty power most chiefly in shewing mercy and pity:" it is in mercy that he spares us, in mercy that he pardons our sins, and in mercy that he enables any of us by his grace to believe in the name of his dear Son, and to walk in his commandments; for "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James v. 11.

Q. What particular mercy do we pray for in this Collect?

A. We pray that God will "mercifully grant unto us such a measure of his grace, that we running the way of his commandments, may obtain his gracious promises." The mercy of God does not lead the true Christian to continue in sin, but to fear God, as David observed, saying, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Psalm cxxx. 4. So, in this Collect, after having acknowledged the mercy of God to us sinners, we immediately pray for "his grace," and for "such a measure" of it, "that we *running* the way of his commandments may obtain his gracious promises," which implies not only obedience in general, but a desire and endeavour to excel in holiness, as a man who puts forth all his speed to *run*, outstrips those who walk only an ordinary pace. The object of our running the way of God's commandments, is that we may obtain his gracious promises of everlasting life and happiness, which are so "exceeding great and precious." 2 Pet. i. 4. To this great object the Apostle earnestly exhorts us, "So run that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix. 24.

Q. What further do we pray that we may "be made partakers of?"

A. "Of God's heavenly treasure," not an earthly treasure of silver or gold, which many run so eagerly after as to lose their souls in the pursuit of, when, after all, it is a treasure which, as St. James tells those who seek after it, "is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." James v. 3. But a heavenly treasure, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt. vi. 20. It is for this heavenly treasure, and these gracious promises, that we pray to have "such a measure of the grace of God," as to "run the way of his commandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord," in whom the promises are made, and who hath purchased this heavenly treasure for his people;—that, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we may press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 13, 14.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy, forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does the Collect teach us, of the willingness of Almighty God to hear our prayers?

A. That he is "always more ready to hear, than we to pray." The best Christians know, by sad experience, that they are often unready for prayer and communion with God; and when they draw near unto him, either in public or private, they have cause to lament the wandering of their thoughts, and the manifold infirmities of their best duties: but God is "always more ready to hear than we to pray;" he is ready at all times, and upon all occasions, to listen to our requests, much more than we are to present them unto him. "It shall come to pass (saith the Lord) that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear;" Isa. lxv. 24; so ready is God to hear the supplications of his people.

Q. What is Almighty God "wont," or accustomed "to give" unto us?

A. "More than either we desire or deserve." He is wont to give unto us more than we *desire*. We have a striking instance of this in the case of King Solomon. Solomon went up to Gibeon to sacrifice unto the Lord, and God appeared unto him in a dream, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee;" and Solomon asked God to give him "an understanding heart to judge his people, that he might discern between good and bad." And the Lord was so pleased with Solomon's request, that he not only granted his prayer, but gave him a great deal more than he had desired: "Lo, (says God) I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." 1 Kings iii. 4—13. Thus God exceeded the desires of Solomon, and he is still "wont to give more" than our largest desires, for

he "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Eph. iii. 20.—Again, He is "wont to give more" than we *deserve*. Indeed we deserve nothing; as Jacob said to God, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant." Gen. xxxii. 10. We are not worthy of any of the blessings of this life, for we have forfeited them all; nay, if we had our deserts, we should be sent to hell for ever, because we have sinned against God: but "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Psalm ciii. 10, 11.

Q. What do we pray that God will "pour down upon us?"

A. "The abundance of his mercy." As God is so ready to hear and answer prayer, and to give so abundantly beyond either our desires or deserts, we pray that he will "pour down upon us the abundance of his mercy:" as he was pleased to manifest himself of old to his servant Moses, and proclaimed his name to be, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," Exodus xxxiv. 6.

Q. What particular acts of God's mercy do we pray for in this Collect?

A. We pray, first, for God's pardoning mercy; "forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid." If our consciences are not kept in ignorance, or rendered insensible, "by the deceitfulness of sin," we must know and feel that we have offended God, broken his laws, and incurred his displeasure. This makes the conscience afraid, and prompts us to cry earnestly unto God for his mercy in Christ to pardon our transgressions; and it is only by a believing view of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, that the conscience

can be appeased. This then is our first object in applying for "the abundance of God's mercy."

Q. What do we pray that God will next give us?

A. "Those good things which we are not worthy to ask;" particularly his Holy Spirit, which our blessed Saviour speaks of as the best gift of God. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," Luke xi. 13. The Apostle to the Hebrews, considering the tenderness and compassion of the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest, puts both these blessings together, saying, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 16. And the Collect concludes, by teaching us the only way in which we can have these blessings; "we are not worthy to ask" them ourselves, but we plead the name of Him who alone is worthy, and pray for them "through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen."

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is the service which God's "faithful people" render unto him?

A. It is here described as "true and laudable ser-

vice." First, it is *true*; that is, agreeable to the word of God, and consistent with that revelation of Divine truth which he has been pleased to make to us. All other service, that is not grounded upon true principles, and agreeable to the word of God, is what the Apostle calls "will worship," Col. ii. 23; and cannot be acceptable unto God. It is also sincere, "without partiality or hypocrisy," James iii. 17; as Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth," Joshua xxiv. 14; and as David walked before God "in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart," 1 Kings iii. 6. This is what the Lord especially requires of us, for he "desireth truth in the inward parts," Psalm li. 6. Again, the service of God's faithful people is *laudable*, that is, praiseworthy: not that the most eminent services merit any thing from God, for after we have done "all those things which are commanded us," we must say that "we are unprofitable servants," Luke xvii. 10; but, still, if it be done in truth, God is pleased to commend it, as he did his servant Job, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Job i. 8; and when the Lord cometh to judgment, it is said of his servants, "then shall every man have praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Q. How does it come to pass, that God's "faithful people do unto him true and laudable service?"

A. "It cometh of the only gift of God." It is not from any ability in themselves that they render unto God true and laudable service; but of the *gift* of God, his *only gift*, which they can receive of none other but him; for "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10.

Q. How do we pray that we may do unto God "true and laudable service?"

A. We beseech him to grant us, "that we may so

faithfully serve him in this life, that we fail not finally to attain his heavenly promises." God's promises of eternal happiness and glory in heaven are made to his faithful servants, and this life is the only season in which they can approve themselves his people by their obedience to his holy will. As our blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, when he took upon himself the form of a servant; "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work," John ix. 4. Hereafter, when this life is ended, the servants of God will be called to receive their reward; "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," Matt. xxv. 21. But this reward is given to them not for the merit of their services, but "through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord," for whose sake we pray that we may have grace to serve God faithfully upon earth, that we may hereafter serve him perfectly in heaven.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Q. What are the graces that we pray unto God to "give us the increase of?"

A. "Faith, hope, and charity;" the three eminent graces which mark the Christian character. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three," 1 Cor. xiii. 13. The Gospel for the day gives us a lively ex-

ample of *faith* in the case of the Samaritan leper, who came with nine others afflicted with the same disease, "and lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed; but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole," Luke xvii. 11—19. Sin is a sore disease of the soul, as leprosy was of the body; and they who have true faith, come to Christ for a cure, and say with earnest prayer, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." They also do not forget to give him all the glory, acknowledging the favour which they have received, and showing themselves grateful for the benefit conferred upon them. *Hope* is the next grace, and springs from faith; for it is by our believing the promises of God in Christ Jesus, that we hope for them. It has respect to the things of another world, which are unseen, but realized by faith; for "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it," Rom. viii. 24, 25. It has God for its object, as David said, "My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him," Psalm lxii. 5. And it is centered in Christ; "Christ in you, the hope of glory," Col. i. 27. *Charity* is love to God, producing love to our fellow-creatures, as has been already described in the Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday. This grace also springs from faith, as the Apostle observes; "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned,"

1 Tim. i. 5. We pray that God will give us an increase of these graces, as the disciples prayed unto Christ, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5: and as St. Paul prayed for the Romans, "that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13; and for the Philippians, that their charity might increase. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," Phil. i. 9—11.

Q. What do we pray for in order "that we may obtain that which God doth promise?"

A. That he will make us to "love that which he doth command." If we have no love to the commandments of God, but obey them merely from fear of punishment, or from any worldly motive, such obedience will not be accepted with God, because it not only wants the proper motive, but is partial, defective, and hypocritical: but to keep God's commandments so as to please him, we must love them; and then we shall not fail to obey them. "I love thy commandments," says the Psalmist, "above gold, yea, above fine gold: therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way," Psalm cxix. 127, 128. If therefore we would obtain that which God doth promise, we must pray that he will "make us (for he alone can do it) to love that which he commands, through Jesus Christ our Lord," who, "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," Heb. v. 8, 9.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

KEEP, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy church with thy perpetual mercy ; and because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. How do we pray the Lord in this Collect, to keep his church ?

A. With his " perpetual mercy ; " And this God has promised to do for his church, saying by his prophet, " I the Lord do keep it : I will water it every moment : lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Isa. xxvii. 3. And again, after promising that his church shall be enlarged, and calling himself the husband of his church, the Lord says, " For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment : but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Isa. liv. 7, 8.

Q. What do we here acknowledge of " the frailty of man ? "

A. That without God, it " cannot but fall." Such is the frailty and weakness of our mortal nature, that not only " we cannot always stand upright ; " as was observed in the Collect for the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany ; but we must of necessity fall : we cannot do otherwise, unless God supports us by his grace every moment. Our Saviour told his disciples this, when comparing himself to a vine, and them to the branches, he showed them, that " as the branch cannot

bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more could they, except they abode in him." And that if they abode in him, and he in them, they should "bring forth much fruit;" but, says he, "without me ye can do nothing." Without Christ, we must fall, for "if a man abide not in him, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John xv. 4—6.

Q. What do we pray for "because the frailty of man without God cannot but fall?"

A. We pray, first, that God will "keep us ever by his help from all things hurtful;" that is, from all sin, and from every evil thing that may injure our souls: and as we have no help in ourselves, but such is our frailty, that "without God we cannot but fall," we ask to be kept by *his help*, who alone is able to support us, and that we may have the help of God to keep us for "ever." We pray, in the next place, that he will "lead us to all things profitable to our salvation." We do not pray to be led into those things that may be profitable to our worldly interest, but "to all things profitable to our salvation," because salvation is our great concern. Our Saviour, in the Gospel for this day, teaches us to make it so; not to be over anxious about the things of this life, but to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" and then to trust in the providence of God, that all necessary things, "shall be added unto us." Matt. vi. 33. These blessings we pray for, "through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy church; and because it

cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we pray God, in this Collect, to do for his church?

A. We pray that his "continual pity may cleanse and defend it." Christ, says the Apostle, "loved the church, and gave himself for it: that he might sanctify and *cleanse* it with the washing of water by the word: that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27. We pray here that he will still do the same for his church, that his continual pity may be exercised towards it, to purify it from all uncleanness, to sanctify it by his Holy Spirit, of which water is the emblem, to cleanse it by his word, and at length present it unto himself, clothed in his own most perfect righteousness, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." We pray also, that his continual pity may "*defend* his church;" that he will preserve it, and keep it from all dangers by which it may be assaulted. Christ promised to do this for his church, saying, "Upon this rock," (that is, upon himself, whom St. Peter confessed to be the Christ, the Son of the living God) "upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. What do we acknowledge that the church of God cannot do "without his succour?"

A. That "it cannot continue in safety without his succour." The church is compared to a building, as St. Peter says, "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house;" 1 Pet. ii. 5; and in the same chapter, Christ is called the foundation, "a chief corner stone, elect, precious." St. Paul also makes use of the same comparison, when speaking to the Corinthian church he says, "Ye are God's building;" and of Christ, as

the foundation of this building, he says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. iii. 9—11. Now as a building cannot stand without a foundation, but if that gives way, the whole superstructure will immediately fall; so it is with the church of Christ: "it cannot continue in safety without his succour," but unless he supports it continually, it will soon fall to decay, and perish.

Q. What do we pray that God will do for his church.

A. "Because it cannot continue in safety without his succour;" We pray that he will "preserve it evermore by his help and goodness." Though the building is weak in itself, yet the foundation is strong; though the enemies of the church, like the waves of the sea, lift up their voice against it, yet "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters." Psalm xciii. 3, 4. He is able to preserve his church in the midst of the greatest dangers, for his *help* is almighty, and his *goodness* infinite. We pray, therefore, that God will "preserve his church evermore by his help and goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord:" after the example of St. Paul in the Epistle for this day, who prays for the Ephesians, "that God would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 16—19

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

LORD, we pray thee, that thy grace may always prevent and follow us ; and make us continually to be given to all good works, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we pray for in this Collect ?

A. We pray for the grace of God ; first, to “ prevent ” us ; secondly, to “ follow us ; ” and thirdly, to “ make us continually to be given to all good works.”

Q. What is meant by the first thing we ask God’s grace for, to “ prevent ” us ?

A. It means to go before us ; not merely to assist our good endeavours, for we have no good endeavours of ourselves ; we neither can nor do seek God first, and if left to ourselves we should never seek him at all ; but he must first send his grace into our hearts, before we can make any effort towards him, or take a single step in the way to heaven. First, as to our knowledge of divine things, it is “ God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” who must shine into “ our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. iv. 6. As to repentance, Christ is exalted to give it, Acts v. 31. “ Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Faith also is “ the gift of God ; ” Eph. ii. 8 ; and holiness, “ For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that he should walk in them.” Eph. ii. 10. In all these things, it is the grace of God preventing his people, that inclines them to seek the Lord, and to walk in his ways ; and there-

fore we pray that his grace may "always prevent" us, for without God's preventing grace we shall be utterly destitute of all true religion.

Q. What is the second thing for which we ask the grace of God?

A. That it may "follow" us. Not only must the grace of God begin the work in our souls, but the same grace must carry it on. As it was at the building of the second temple, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;" so it is in the progress of a Christian as a living temple of God; it is all of grace, and when the work is finished, it shall be "with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Zech. iv. 6, 7. The children of God, in whose hearts the work of grace is begun, "go from strength to strength;" till at last, "every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Psalm lxxxiv. 7. David was assured of this when he said, "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Psalm xxiii. 6. And thus we pray, that the grace of God may "always follow," as well as "prevent us," and that this good work in our souls may be carried on in grace here, till at length it shall be completed in glory hereafter.

Q. What is the third particular which we pray for in this Collect?

A. That God's grace will "make us continually to be given to all good works." This is the sure effect of the grace of God, and shows that we have indeed partaken of it. In the Epistle for the day, we are particularly exhorted to good works. St. Paul, who was at that time a prisoner at Rome for the cause of Jesus Christ, says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," Eph. iv. 1—3. These are some of the

good works that we pray continually to be given to, "through Jesus Christ our Lord;" that we may in all things adorn our Christian profession, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, to his honour and glory, for whose sake we pray that the grace of God may always be communicated unto us.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT,

LORD, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What temptations do we pray God to grant his people grace to withstand?

A. "The temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil." The world has many temptations, and many persons who have made a profession of religion, have been ensnared by them. The love of the world tempted Demas to forsake St. Paul; (2 Tim. iv. 10.) the honours of the world prevailed on Balaam to disobey God, and led him on to very great iniquity; (Numb. xxii. 17. 2 Pet. ii. 15.) the fear of the world kept back some from confessing Christ, though they were convinced in their minds that he was the Son of God; (John xii. 42, 43.) and the love of money tempted Judas to betray him; (Matt. xxvi. 14, 15.) There are many temptations also from the flesh; temptations to uncleanness, intemperance, sloth, anger, malice, and every other evil passion of our corrupt nature; "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to

the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17. There are also temptations from the devil, who is ever upon the watch to take advantage of the corruptions of our hearts, and to draw us into sin. He "filled the heart" of Ananias to tell a lie, Acts v. 3; he "put it into the heart of Judas" to betray his Master, John xiii. 2; he "desired to have" St. Peter, "that he might sift him as wheat," Luke xxii. 31; he "blinds the minds of them that believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 4; he "now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2; and tempts men to the commission of all sin, 1 John iii. 8. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."

Q. How can the people of God "withstand these temptations?"

A. Not in themselves, but by the grace of God, as we pray in the Collect; "Grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil." This is the way in which St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to withstand temptation, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil:" and afterwards, he describes what the whole armour of God is, which the Christian must use in the time of temptation; namely, truth, or sincerity; righteousness; the preparation of the gospel of peace; faith; the hope of salvation; the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and finally, earnest and persevering prayer, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance," Eph. vi. 10—18. If we depend upon our own strength, we cannot stand in the hour of trial; but if we humbly look up to God, and rely upon his grace, he will not fail to strengthen and support us; for "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a

way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

Q. What else do we pray for the people of God ?

A. That "with pure hearts and minds they may follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." God, whom we pray that his people may follow, is the *only God*; "The Lord, he is God; there is none else besides him: he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else," Deut. iv. 35, 39. And on this very account, God must be followed; "Thou shalt keep, therefore, his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee this day," ver. 40. We pray that God's people may follow him "with pure hearts and minds," for he is a God "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity," Hab. i. 13. When St. James exhorts us to "draw nigh to God," and says, that "he will draw nigh to us," he shows us how we must approach him; "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded," James iv. 8: and our Saviour said. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8. But our hearts and minds by nature are impure; and in order that we may follow God, "with pure hearts and minds," we must pray as David did, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," Psalm li. 10. We must as much ask for the grace of God to purify our hearts, as to enable us to withstand temptation; which we here do, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," by whom alone we can follow God; for he has said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," John xiv. 6.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee ; Mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we acknowledge in this Collect that we are not able to do without God ?

A. We acknowledge that " without God we are not able to please him." To please God is to be approved by him, and accepted with him : it is to serve him in that way which he requires of us in his holy word, or else we please not God, but ourselves. To please God, we must repent of our sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, relying upon his merits as the ground of our acceptance with God, and live a holy life in obedience to his commandments. Thus Enoch by faith walked with God, and " had this testimony, that he pleased God ; but without faith, it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 5, 6.

Q. How does it appear that " without God, we are not able to please him ?"

A. As we cannot please God except we live in obedience to his will, so we are not able of ourselves to obey that will ; we cannot repent, or believe, or do any good works by our own power ; but " without God," to renew our hearts by his Holy Spirit, we shall still remain in our natural state, and then we cannot please him ; " because the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. viii. 7, 8.

Q. How then do we pray that God will enable us to please him?

A. We pray that he will mercifully grant, that his "Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts." First, that his "Holy Spirit" may *direct* our hearts; that he will show us the right way, and teach us how to walk so as to please God; and then that he will "*rule* our hearts;" that we may not only be *under* his direction, but under his government; that having shown us the right way, and led us into the knowledge of all saving truth, he will incline us to walk therein, according to the commandments of God. We pray also, that God's Holy Spirit will direct and rule our hearts "in *all* things;" not partially, but universally; for this is what constitutes the sincerity of a Christian, and without this we cannot please God. These things we ask, "through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness, keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we pray God in this Collect to keep us from?

A. "All things that may hurt us," and this we beseech him to do of his "bountiful goodness." We address him in this Collect, not only as an "Almighty God," who is able to give us what we ask, but as a "most merciful God," whose bounty and goodness is

exceeding great : " He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil," Luke vi. 35. " He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing," Psalm cxlv. 16 ; and therefore, the Psalmist praises God for his " bountiful goodness " to his creatures, saying, " Blessed be the Lord, who loadeth us daily with benefits," Psalm lxxviii. 19. God's bountiful goodness flows to us through Jesus Christ ; and, trusting to that goodness. we beseech " God to keep us from all things that may hurt us ; " from all things that may injure our bodies. so far as it is agreeable to his will ; and especially from all things that may hurt our souls ; from sin of every kind, and from whatsoever would lead us away from God and Christ, in whom alone our souls can be either safe or happy.

Q. For what end do we pray that God of his bountiful goodness will keep us from all things that may hurt us ?

A. " That we being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that God would have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The body and soul must go together in the service of God : first, we pray that we may be ready in body ; that is, that our bodies may be kept in temperance, chastity, and sobriety, and so always fit to accompany the soul in the service of God. Hence, St. Paul speaks of fornication, as a sin of deeper guilt than many others ; because thereby, not only the soul, but the body is defiled, which ought to be " for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body ; " (for) " every sin that a man doeth is without the body ; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body." 1 Cor. vi. 13, 18. The same also may be said of drunkenness, and all excess whereby the body is defiled. As Christians, we are exhorted " by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service." Rom. xii. 1. We must however, not only present our bodies, but our souls too. This is the chief

thing, without which, the service of our bodies will not be acceptable to God; for he looks at the contrite heart, more than the bended knee, and regards the desires of the soul, more than the words of the lips. This is farther expressed, by our praying that we “*may cheerfully* accomplish those things which God would have done:” for he requires to be served not by constraint, as slaves obey their masters, for fear of punishment; but with cheerfulness, as a dutiful child who loves his father, and knows that he enjoins him nothing but what is for his good, obeys his commands with delight and affection. “God” (says the Apostle) “loveth a cheerful giver;” 2 Cor. ix. 7; and if he loves that we should give willingly of our substance to relieve the necessities of our fellow-Christians; much more does he require us to serve him with cheerfulness and alacrity; that “we being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things which he would have done, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. How are the people of God described in this Collect?

A. They are called his “faithful people:” and they are so in two senses; first, because they believe in him

with a true and living faith; and secondly, they are enabled to serve him faithfully, though imperfectly; as "Moses was faithful in all his house." Heb. ii. 5. St. Peter informs us how they become God's faithful people, when he addresses his second Epistle, "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. i. 1.

Q. What do we here pray for them?

A. First, we pray that God will grant unto them "pardon;" which implies that they are sinners as well as others. Not only those who are daringly wicked and profane are guilty before God; but his faithful people acknowledge themselves to have broken his commandments, and deserved his indignation; and while others, ignorant of themselves, are boasting of their uprightness, "and going about to establish their own righteousness," Rom. x. 3; *they* are crying for pardon, and saying, "Lord be merciful unto me: heal my soul: for I have sinned against thee." Psalm xli. 4. "And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm cxlii. 2.

Q. What else do we pray for God's "faithful people?"

A. We pray next, that God will grant them "peace;" that is, a well-grounded belief that God for Christ's sake has forgiven their sins, and blotted out all their iniquities. St. Paul speaks largely of this blessing, as the effect of believing in Christ for the pardon of our sins; saying, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Rom. v. 1, 2, 11.

Q. Why do we pray the Lord to grant unto his "faithful people pardon?"

A. "That they may be cleansed from all their sins;"

that their iniquities may be blotted out, and their guilt washed away in the blood of Christ; that they may be delivered from the defiling nature of sin here, and from that awful punishment which awaits unpardoned iniquity hereafter. This is indeed an unspeakable blessing, greater than all that the world calls good, or desirable: men may pronounce the rich, the great, and the affluent, happy, but the word of God says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

Q. For what end do we pray God to "grant unto his faithful people peace?"

A. That they may "serve him with a quiet mind." Being in a state of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, his faithful people may look up to him with cheerful confidence as their God and Father. They need not be disturbed with what they meet with in this present life, because they are looking for a better inheritance, "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" Heb. xi. 10: and when their faith is in exercise they will do so. Thus the prophet said, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. iii. 17, 18. These blessings of pardon and peace, we pray for "through Jesus Christ our Lord;" for he hath procured pardon for the guilty by dying for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" 1 Pet. iii. 18; and he also hath "made peace through the blood of his cross." Col. i. 20. "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. ii. 17, 18.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

LORD, we beseech thee to keep thy household, the church, in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. In what do we pray the Lord "to keep his household the church?"

A. "In continual godliness." The universal church, composed of all the faithful people of God, of different nations and denominations amongst men, is here compared to a large "household" or family, of which God is both the Father and Master: and as every good parent and master of a family, will be careful to train up his children and servants in the faith and fear of God; so we pray that the Lord will keep his household the church in continual godliness. St. Paul puts up the same prayer for the Philippian Church in the Epistle for this day; and after thanking God for their "fellowship in the Gospel from the first day" (that they heard it) "until now;" and expressing his confidence, that God who had "begun a good work in them," would not fail to carry it on, and "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" inasmuch as they had stood by and supported the Apostle, both in his imprisonment for the cause of Christ, and "in the defence and confirmation of his Gospel," and so made it evident that they were "all partakers of his grace;" he says, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent: that ye may be sin-

cere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Phil. i. 3—11.

Q. Why do we pray the Lord to keep his church in continual godliness?

A. First, that through his "protection it may be free from all adversities." It is very natural for children, when they are in danger, to apply to their father for protection: but God can do more for his family the church, than any earthly parent can do for his children; for he is not only their Father and their Master, but also their King; possessed of sovereign and almighty power, and able to defend them from all dangers. And as we pray that he will keep his household, the church, in continual godliness, so we pray likewise, that through his protection it may be free from all adversities; for the Lord "loveth his people; all his saints are in his hand: the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them." Deut. xxxiii. 3, 27.

Q. For what other purpose do we pray God "to keep his household the church in continual godliness?"

A. That it may be "devoutly given to serve him in good works to the glory of his name." If God has called his church out of the world, adopted it into his family, and distinguished it by many privileges; and if Christ has redeemed and purchased the church at so great a price as the shedding of his own most precious blood; it is for this end, that it should be "devoutly given to serve him in good works." If he has made them his children, it is that they may be "obedient children, not fashioning themselves according to the former lusts in their ignorance: but as he which hath called them is holy, so they must be holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 14—16. This holiness, which God requires

of his church, is not by their own good endeavours, for of themselves they can do nothing ; but it is the work of God in their hearts. He himself keeps “ his household the church in continual godliness ; which blessing we must pray unto him for, as this Collect teaches us. Nor are the good works of God’s people to be done in order to bring credit to themselves, and gain the applause of men ; but to glorify the name of God, “ That they should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light ;” 1 Pet. ii. 9 ; and “ Let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven ;” Matt. v. 16. “ through Jesus Christ our Lord,” in whom God is glorified, and for whose sake we ask these mercies for his church and people.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the Author of all godliness ; Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy church ; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully, we may obtain effectually, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we acknowledge in this Collect, that God is to us ?

A. First, he is “ our refuge :” He is our only support in all the dangers to which we are exposed, and we can fly no where for shelter but to him. David contrasts the refuge which God is to his people, with the impotence of our fellow-creatures, on whom we are so much disposed to rely. “ God is a refuge for us ;” but “ surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of

high degree are a lie : to be laid in the balance," (that is, to be weighed with God, and compared with the help that he can afford us) " they are altogether lighter than vanity," Psalm lxii. 8, 9. But we are not only to consider God as a refuge in general ; for in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are taught to look further ; and to consider Christ as the refuge of God's own appointment for sinners to fly to, that they may be saved. This was represented in a very striking manner under the law : six cities were appointed, called Cities of Refuge, for the man-slayer who had killed any one unawares, to flee unto ; and the next of kin to the person who was slain, called the avenger of blood, pursued after him ; and if he overtook him before he reached one of these cities of refuge, he was justified in putting him to death ; but if the man-slayer got to the city of refuge before the avenger of blood overtook him, he was safe ; and there he was to remain till the death of the High Priest, Numb. xxxv. 11—28. Now this was not only a merciful provision in behalf of the man-slayer, but it was designed to teach us, that as we have all broken the law of God, and are by consequence exposed to his just indignation ; so there can be no safety for us unless we fly for refuge to Christ, (of whom these cities of refuge were a figure) and take shelter from the vengeance of God, through the death of Jesus our great High Priest ; without whom Divine justice, like the avenger of blood, will fall heavy upon us to our everlasting destruction. But if we come unto him as penitent sinners, confessing our guilt, and relying upon his merits ; we have the promise and the oath of God in our behalf ; " That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us," Heb. vi. 18.

Q. What do we acknowledge that God is to us in the next place ?

A. He is our " strength." It is of importance for

those who have made God their refuge, to know that they have fled to one who is able to protect and strengthen them. Now such a refuge God is to his people; and therefore David calls him, "the rock of his strength," as well as his refuge, Psalm lxii. 7. "For who is God, save the Lord? or, who is a rock, save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect," Psalm xviii. 31, 32. God is frequently spoken of as being the strength, and the refuge of his people, in the same passage of Scripture. Thus the prophet Isaiah says, "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall," Isa. xxv. 4. And the Psalmist says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," Psalm xlv. 1.

Q. What is God declared to be, farther in this Collect?

A. He is "the Author of all godliness." Some may imagine, when Christ is spoken of as a refuge for the guilty, and that sinners who come to him by faith shall be saved, that this doctrine will lead men to be careless about a holy life: but it is a great mistake; for there is in truth nothing so conducive as this, to promote universal obedience to the commandments of God. God in Christ is not only our refuge and our strength, but the Author of all godliness; there is no godliness but what comes from him, and those who make him their refuge and strength shall be enabled by his grace to live a holy life, and to be fruitful in every good word and work; and the more they trust in him for support, so much the more will they grow in grace, and increase in all godliness. Being united to Christ, they shall "receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace," John i. 16. "Lord," says the prophet, "thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us," Isa. xxvi. 12.

Q. What do we pray in this Collect for the church of God?

A. We pray that God will "be ready to hear the devout prayers of his church." There is an essential difference between the prayers of a formal professor of religion and those of a true Christian: the one merely repeats a form of words in which his heart is unconcerned; but the other, though his prayers are mixed with many imperfections, yet offers up "*devout prayers*," which spring from a principle of true devotion in the heart, and as they come from God, ascend to God. These are the prayers which we beseech God to be ready to hear; and he has promised in his word that he will hear them; for "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them," Psalm cxlv. 18, 19. And St. James says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," James v. 16.

Q. What do we beseech God to grant in answer to our prayers?

A. That those things which we ask faithfully, we may obtain effectually." Our prayers, to be acceptable to God, must be offered up in faith, or asked faithfully; "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed," James i. 6. And what "we ask faithfully," we pray that we may "obtain effectually;" failing not to have our requests granted, in that way which God knows will be most suitable for us: all which we beg through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences ; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed : Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

Q. What do we ask for the people of God in this Collect ?

A. We beseech the Lord to " absolve them from their offences." Once more our church reminds us that we are sinners, and teaches us to pray unto God, to absolve or acquit his people, from the guilt, dominion, and punishment of those transgressions, whereby they have justly offended him. More particularly, in the following part of this Collect, we pray to be delivered from the dominion of sin. In like manner the prophet exhorts Israel to return unto the Lord their God ; " Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord : say unto him, ' Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously : so will we render the calves (or fruit) of our lips,' " Hos. xiv. 1, 2.

Q. What do we pray to be delivered from through God's bountiful goodness ?

A. " The bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed." Sin is here compared to bands or chains, by which we all are bound, and kept in a state of slavery, till set at liberty by the grace of God. We all know how much this is the case with respect to some sins, such as drunkenness and uncleanness ; and that those who live in the practice of such vices, are

enslaved by them in so awful a manner, that they will not give them up, though they know the consequences must be misery here, and everlasting destruction hereafter. Nor is it so with gross sinners only, but even with the more decent and moral, who are as much enslaved to prejudice, and the manners, customs, and opinions of the world, though ever so contrary to the word of God. Our Saviour told the Jews this, who were exceedingly surprised when he promised to make them free, and said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man : how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" But "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever : but the Son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John viii. 33—36. We pray then, that we may be made free, "that we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed;" and experience the truth of that promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" and that, "now being made free from sin, and become servants to God," we may have our "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," Rom. vi. 14—22. These things we ask through the "bountiful goodness" of God, which only flows to us in one channel, that is, through Jesus Christ our Lord : and therefore a particular stress is laid upon this at the close of the Collect : "Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen."

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT.

STIR up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What do we here pray the Lord to do for his faithful people?

A. We beseech him to "stir up" their "wills." David, when speaking of the kingdom of Christ, said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" Psalm cx. 3; and the faithful people of God know that without his almighty grace to excite and stir up their wills, they would soon grow careless, negligent, and formal; and therefore, when St. Paul exhorts the Philippians to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling," he adds, "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12, 13. The best Christians often find cause to complain of deadness of heart, and want of spirituality; and then they pray that God will stir up their wills by his quickening grace, and make them more alive to heavenly things. Thus David, when "the enemy persecuted his soul," and made him "to dwell in darkness," so that his spirit failed, said, "Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake;" Psalm cxlii. 3, 7, 11; and the church, acknowledging her misery, prays in this affecting manner; "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Psalm lxxx. 18, 19.

Q. For what purpose do we pray God to "stir up the wills" of his "faithful people?"

A. "That they, plenteously bring forth the fruit of good works, may of him be plenteously rewarded." "Herein" (said our Saviour) "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples;" John xv. 8; and to encourage us to abound in all good works, God has graciously promised a reward; "For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed toward his name;" Heb. vi. 10; and even a cup of cold water, if given from the proper motive, shall not fail of being rewarded, Matt. x. 42. St. Paul uses this argument to stir up God's faithful people plenteously to bring forth the fruit of good works," assuring them that they shall reap a most abundant reward from a gracious and bountiful God, saying, "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." 2 Cor. ix. 6. And our Saviour said to his disciples, "Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest." Luke vi. 35. Not that we are to imagine that we shall be rewarded *for*, or *on account of*, our good works: this would be to overthrow the Gospel at once; for the reward then would not be "of grace, but of debt;" Rom. iv. 5; but it is *entirely* of grace, undeserved and unmerited by us. The best works, of the best men, are not only done by the grace of God given unto them, so that the whole glory belongs to him; but, if weighed in the balance of his justice, they would be found wanting; and the most holy Christian that ever lived would abhor the thought of claiming any reward for them. Jesus Christ alone hath merited this reward for his faithful people; and through him we pray God so to "stir up" their "wills, that they may plenteously bring forth the fruit of good works, and of him be plenteously rewarded," for our blessed Redeemer's sake; who has said, "Behold, I come quickly; and

my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. xxii. 12.

SAINT ANDREW'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. Who was the "holy Apostle Saint Andrew?"

A. He was the brother of Peter, and followed with him the occupation of fishing. Jesus, (as the Gospel for this day informs us) walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matt. iv. 18, 19. That is, I will make you my ministers, to preach the Gospel, whereby men shall be brought to believe on me, to the salvation of their souls. The great work of bringing souls to Christ by means of the Gospel, bears some resemblance to the occupation of fishing, from which our blessed Lord was pleased to call many of his disciples. The word of God is the net which is cast into the sea, his ministers are the "fishers of men," preaching the word is casting the net, the sea is this present world, and those who believe in and follow Christ are gathered out of it. For, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every

kind : which when it was full they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world ; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire : " there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xiii. 47—50.

Q. How did St. Andrew obey the calling of our Lord Jesus Christ ?

A. He " obeyed it *readily* and followed him without delay ;" for as soon as he, and his brother St. Peter heard the invitation of Christ, " they straightway left their nets, and followed him." Matt. iv. 20.

Q. How came St. Andrew thus readily to follow Christ ?

A. The Collect teaches us, that it was by Divine grace : " Almighty God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle St. Andrew." It was no small matter for this Apostle to give up his trade by which he got his living, and to follow Christ so readily as he did, without a moment's hesitation. This showed the power of Divine grace in his heart, and proved also his faith in him as the promised Messiah. Very different was the behaviour of that young man, who came to our Lord with great appearance of sincerity, asking him what he should do to have eternal life ; for when Christ put him to the test, and told him to sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and then come and follow him, " he went away sorrowful," (Matt. xix. 16—22) because he preferred an earthly to a heavenly treasure. St. Andrew appears to have been the first disciple whom Jesus called. He was at first a disciple of John the Baptist, and hearing him say of Christ, " Behold the Lamb of God !" he, with another of John's disciples who was with him, followed Jesus, staid with him that day, and afterwards, finding his own brother St. Peter, he said to him, " We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ : and he brought

him to Jesus." John i. 35—42. Thus this holy Apostle not only followed Christ himself, but was the means of bringing his brother to him, that he also might be a follower of the Saviour of the world.

Q. How does Christ call us now?

A. He calls us "by his holy word:" both in the written word, which we call the Scriptures, and also by the word preached. In the Epistle the necessity of hearing the word is pointed out; for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear, without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Rom. x. 14, 15. We are called to follow him, to repent of our sins, and believe the Gospel, which he has commanded to be preached among all nations. There must however be the grace of God to make his word effectual, or it will be addressed to us in vain.

Q. "Being" thus "called by God's holy word," how do we pray that we may receive it?

A. We pray God to "grant unto us all, that we, being called by his holy word, may forthwith give ourselves up obediently to fulfil his holy commandments." In the Epistle for this day, before cited, we are told that "all have not obeyed the Gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" Rom. x. 16. This has always been the case, and is so still. Many come and hear the word preached, like those hearers spoken of Ezek. xxxiii. 31—33, who came and heard the prophet, because he was an eloquent man, and had a fine voice; just as they would have heard a pleasant song, or one that could "play well on an instrument;" but when they came, their hearts "went after their covetousness;" they heard the word of God, but they would not do it. There are many such characters as these; and therefore St. James cautions us against such unprofitable hearing, saying, "Be ye

doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Jam. i. 22. But it is important for us to know, that what we hear *is the word of God*, not corrupted, or handled deceitfully, but what is agreeable to the holy Scriptures; "because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John iv. 1. For this purpose, we must carefully and constantly read the Scriptures, pray that God will enable us to understand them, compare what we hear with them, and pray also for grace according to the example of "the holy Apostle St. Andrew," to obey immediately the call of Christ, and follow him, "that we may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil God's holy commandments, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who for the more confirmation of the faith didst suffer thy holy Apostle Thomas to be doubtful in thy Son's resurrection; Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved: Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

Q. What was St. Thomas "doubtful" in?

A. Christ's resurrection. When our blessed Saviour appeared to his disciples, in the evening of the same day on which he rose from the dead, St. Thomas (as the

Gospel informs us) “ was not with them, the other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But Thomas looking upon the thing as impossible, said, “ Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” Eight days after this, when the disciples were met together, and Thomas with them, “ Jesus came and stood in the midst” - and said, “ Peace be unto you.” Then, in condescension to the weakness of his doubting disciple, he gave him that proof of his resurrection which he had desired. “ Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : and be not faithless, but believing.” Thomas, being now convinced that it was indeed that same Jesus whose hands and feet had been nailed to the cross, and whose side was pierced with the soldier’s spear. “ answered and said unto him My Lord, and my God!” John. xx. 24—28. He acknowledged him to be his Lord and Master, and that he who had thus risen from the dead, by his own Divine power, could be no other than that Saviour “ who is over all, God blessed for ever.” Rom. ix. 5.

Q. Why did Almighty God suffer his “ holy Apostle St. Thomas, to be doubtful in his Son’s resurrection ? ”

A. God permitted it so to be, “ for the more confirmation of the faith.” Nothing could have been a more unanswerable proof of our Saviour’s resurrection, than for one of his own disciples, who doubted of the fact, to put his finger into the very place where the nails were driven through his hands, and to put his hand into the wound which the spear had made in his side ; for this showed, indeed, that it was really the same body which hung upon the cross, and was afterwards laid in the sepulchre : but if St. Thomas had not been doubtful of it at first, this additional proof of Christ’s resurrection, in all probability, would not have been given. Not that the incredulity of St. Thomas was to be commended : st

far from it, that Christ himself gave him this gentle rebuke, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," John xx. 29; blaming him, that he would take no evidence but that of his senses. Yet God overruled it for good, and suffered this Apostle to doubt "for the more confirmation of the faith," that we might have thereby another incontestible proof of the reality of our Saviour's resurrection.

Q. What do we pray for, from this example of the unbelief of St. Thomas?

A. We pray that God will "grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in his sight may never be reprov'd." Unbelief is natural to us all; we are all prone to doubt and question, where we ought to submit implicitly to the revealed will of God. When, therefore, we read of such instances of infirmity in those who were the faithful servants of Christ, (as this holy Apostle was) we should remember that caution which says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God;" Heb. iii. 12; and as faith is his gift, we should consider our own weakness, and be continually "looking unto Jesus," who is, "the author and finisher," of faith, Heb. xii. 2. Many persons, indeed, think it a very easy thing to believe; but they who imagine thus, know very little of the nature of true faith: and the reason that they have no particular doubts arising in their minds, is, most likely, because they have no great concern about religion, and have taken these things for granted, as the commonly received opinions of the church in which they have been brought up. In this Collect, as sensible of our own weakness, we pray for *strong* faith; that God will "grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in his sight may never be reprov'd:" for at the same time that he reprov'd the unbelief of St. Thomas, he said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have be-

lieved," John xx. 29. Finally, as we pray in this Collect for strong faith, that we may "perfectly, and without all doubt, believe" in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and our only Saviour, and accordingly rely entirely upon him for pardon and salvation; so we are taught to offer up this prayer to God with particular earnestness, beseeching him to "hear us," for the sake of his dear Son, and ascribing everlasting glory and honour to him, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Thus, the man unto whom our Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth," cried out, and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief;" Mark ix. 23, 24; so with the like importunity we pray, "Hear us, O Lord, through the same Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. Amen."

THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL.

THE COLLECT.

O God, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle St. Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world; Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What was the character of St. Paul before his conversion?

A. St. Paul, as he informs us himself, was "born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, and brought up (in Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel," Acts xxii. 3. who was "a Pharisee, and a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people," Acts v. 34. He was carefully instructed "according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers," Acts xxii. 3. and lived a Pharisee, which was the most strict sect of the Jewish religion. He was exceedingly zealous for the law of Moses; and not believing that our Lord Jesus Christ was the true Messiah, he (from a mistaken and fiery zeal) persecuted his people with the utmost cruelty. When St. Stephen was put to death, he stood by, gave his consent to it, and was not ashamed even to keep the clothes of his executioners, Acts vii. 58, and xxii. 20. After this, "He made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison." Acts viii. 3. In his defence before King Agrippa, he said, "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme: and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts xxvi. 10, 11. And writing to Timothy, he calls himself the "chief of sinners, a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," 1 Tim. xiii. 15; intimating that his sins were so great, that had they not been committed in ignorance and unbelief, he could hardly have hoped for mercy. Such was the character of St. Paul before his conversion.

Q. In what manner was he converted?

A. While he was "yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," (as the Epistle for the day informs us) having obtained a commission from the high priest to go to Damascus, and bring all the followers of Christ, whom he might find there, bound to Jerusalem; "as he journeyed and came

near Damascus, suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Jesus Christ, whose voice it was that he heard, looks upon persecution as a most heinous sin, and showed him that he took it as an injury done to himself. When St. Paul heard the voice which spake unto him, he said, "Who art thou, Lord? and the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Immediately the fierce persecutor was changed into an obedient disciple, and he inquired, with trembling and astonishment, what the Lord would have him to do; "and the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." He then arose, but found himself blind, and was accordingly led by the men who came with him, into Damascus. And after continuing three days without sight and food, Ananias, a disciple, was directed to find him out, who being afraid of him, the Lord showed him that he was truly converted by this sure evidence, "for, behold, he prayeth." Ananias then went to him, and, putting his hands upon him, he received his sight and was baptized. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ." Acts ix. 1—22.

Q. What were the effects that followed St. Paul's preaching?

A. Through the preaching of this blessed Apostle, God hath "caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world." From the period of St. Paul's conversion, he laboured incessantly in the service of Christ, going about from one place to another, and

preaching the glad tidings of salvation wherever he came; as the Lord said to Ananias, "he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts ix. 15, 16. The success of his preaching was very great: it was "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" 1 Cor. ii. 4; and therefore he says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16. And although he did and suffered so much for the cause of Christ, yet he always speaks of himself in the most humble terms, calling himself "the chief of sinners—less than the least of all saints," Eph. iii. 8; and the "least of the apostles, who was not meet to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God." Though he "laboured more abundantly than they all; yet (says he) not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. He told the Colossians, that the word of the truth of the Gospel, which came unto them, was also "in all the world." Col. i. 6. And writing to the Corinthians he says, "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." 2 Cor. ii. 14. So that God abundantly blessed his labours, and "caused" thereby "the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world."

Q. How do we pray to remember St. Paul's "wonderful conversion?"

A. We pray God to grant, "that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto God for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught." In this wonderful event, we are particularly to remember, that conversion is the work of God. There was nothing in St. Paul before his conversion to recommend him to the Divine

mercy ; for even to the moment when he was struck to the ground, his heart was full of enmity against Christ, and the errand he was going upon was to root out his religion from the earth. Nor are there any previous qualifications *now* in those who are converted, to dispose them to receive the grace of God. It is true, all are not bitter persecutors, as St. Paul was ; but all men by nature are far from God ; nor can any one be truly converted unto him without the influence of his grace. We have great reason to be thankful unto God for the wonderful conversion of this blessed Apostle, not only on account of the great mercy and grace bestowed upon him, but for the encouragement given in his example to the vilest of sinners, if like him, they are truly converted and brought to repentance. “ For this cause,” he says, “ I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting,” 1 Tim. i. 16. And we have reason to be thankful also, for the “ holy doctrine ” contained in his Epistles, by which the church of God has been so exceedingly enriched. In them he has set before us the great object of our faith, in whom he gloried, even “ Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” 1 Cor. ii. 2 ; and exhibited to us all the doctrines and duties, the graces and privileges of the Gospel. These things we pray that we may have grace through Christ to follow, that so doing we may show forth our thankfulness to God for the “ wonderful conversion ” of his “ blessed Apostle St. Paul,” and thereby prove that we have not “ received the grace of God in vain,” 2 Cor. vi. 1.

THE
PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE,
COMMONLY CALLED
THE PURIFICATION OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, we humbly beseech thy Majesty, that as thy only begotten Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts, by the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does the Collect mention concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, as on this day?

A. That he was "presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh." The law of God required that all the first-born male children of the Israelites should be "called holy to the Lord," and solemnly presented unto him in his Temple. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify to me all the first-born," Exod. xiii. 1, 2. And again; "Because all the first-born are mine: for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast: mine they shall be: I am the Lord," Numb. iii. 13. There can be no doubt but this precept had an especial reference to Christ; for though it might represent the holiness which God requires of his people; yet the principal design of it was to point out Christ, who was not only the first born son of his mother, the Virgin Mary; but also the only begotten Son of God; "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:" by whom and for whom all things were created; "who is

the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 15—18 ; and who was not only solemnly presented unto God in the Temple, when he took our nature upon him, but was consecrated and set apart by the Father to be our High Priest from all eternity, Heb. vii. 28. The Purification of the Virgin Mary was in obedience to another command of God, who (as if to teach the Israelites that all mankind are conceived and born in sin) enjoined, that when a child was born, the mother should be considered unclean for a certain number of days ; and when these days were ended, she was to bring " a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle dove, for a sin offering : " but if she was poor, and " not able to bring a lamb," then she was to bring " two turtles, or two young pigeons," Lev. xii. 6, 7. unto the priest, who should make an atonement for her. And although Christ was not born in sin as all mankind are, but conceived in a miraculous manner by the Holy Ghost, and born perfectly free from sin, so that his Virgin Mother needed no purification ; yet, in obedience to the law, she submitted to this ordinance ; and not being able to afford a lamb, brought the humbler offering ; " According to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons," Luke ii. 24 ; as described at large in the Gospel for this day.

Q. How do we pray to be presented unto God ?

A. We humbly beseech the Divine Majesty, " that as his only begotten Son was this day presented in the Temple in substance of our flesh ; so by him we may be presented unto God with pure and clean hearts." The spiritual Israel, who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, are especially required to serve God with pure and clean hearts. Thus St. Paul admonished Timothy, " Flee also youthful lusts ; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," 2 Tim. ii. 22.

St. Peter shows us the awful punishment which awaits unclean persons ; for the Lord will “ reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished : but chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness,” 2 Pet. ii. 9, 10. And our blessed Saviour, by whom we pray that we “ may be presented unto God with pure and clean hearts,” pronounces a blessing upon those who are so, saying, “ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” Matt. v. 8. But this prayer has a more extensive meaning, for we not only pray in it that God (who alone can do it, by his Holy Spirit) will sanctify our hearts, and make them clean ; but from the petition that our Lord Jesus Christ will *present* us with pure and clean hearts unto God, we acknowledge that we dare not stand before him in our own righteousness, for “ we are all as an unclean thing,” Isa. lxiv. 6 ; but we pray that our souls may be washed in the blood of Christ, which “ cleanseth from all sin,” 1 John i. 7, and so be presented by him unto God, and join that blessed company, who are saying, “ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen,” Rev. i. 5, 6.

SAINT MATTHIAS'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who, in the place of the traitor Judas, didst choose thy faithful servant Matthias to be of the number of the Twelve Apostles ; Grant that thy church being always preserved from false apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does the Collect say of God's faithful servant Matthias?

A. That Almighty God chose him "in the place of the traitor Judas to be of the number of the Twelve Apostles." Judas, having turned out a traitor, and betrayed his Master, and having afterwards hanged himself and perished miserably; Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, (as the Epistle for the day informs us) who were met together after our Saviour's resurrection, and showed them that the miserable death of this wicked man had been foretold long before, by David, in the Book of Psalms; and that now it was expedient to make choice of some faithful person, who had accompanied with the Apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus was with them, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day when Christ ascended up into heaven, that he might be a witness with them of Christ's resurrection, in the place of the traitor Judas. Accordingly they made choice of two men of good report, "Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." And being in doubt which of the two to prefer, they committed the matter unto the Lord; "And they prayed, and said, Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." And then, according to the ancient practice of deciding difficult matters by lot, "they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles," Acts i. 15—26.

Q. What do we pray to God that his church may be "always preserved from?"

A. "From false apostles." The church has ever been infested with some false teachers; nor need we wonder at this, when such a man as Judas was found among the twelve Apostles, though they were chosen

by Christ himself. St. Paul also told the Elders of the Ephesian Church, that he knew "that after his departing, grievous wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock; and also of their own selves men should arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," Acts xx. 29, 30. And writing to Timothy, he says, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables," 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. So likewise St. Peter says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you; who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you," 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. And St. John says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now it is already in the world," 1 John iv. 1—3. Yet it is our duty to pray that the church of God may be preserved from such false apostles as these: and our blessed Saviour cautions us against them, saying, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves;" and then gives a sign whereby they may be known; "Ye shall know them by their fruits," Matt. vii. 15: for corrupt doctrine and a bad life commonly go together. St. John

also says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 9—11.

Q. How do we pray that the church of God "may be ordered and guided?"

A. "By faithful and true pastors," such as St. Matthias was. By honest and upright men, full of faith, and grounded in the truths of God: such as St. Paul, who says, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ," 2 Cor. ii. 17. "Not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God," 2 Cor. iv. 2. "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts: neither at any time used we flattering words, nor a cloak of covetousness, nor of men sought we glory," 1 Thess. ii. 3—6. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," 2 Cor. iv. 5. These are the pastors that we pray to God may order and guide his church, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," who is "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," 1 Pet. ii. 25; "and when he," who is the supreme Pastor of his flock, and the chief Shepherd, "shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 4.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

THE COLLECT.

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts ; that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection ; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. Why is this festival called " The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary ? "

A. Because the angel Gabriel was sent from God to the blessed Virgin Mary to *announce* the glad tidings unto her that she was the person whom God had so highly favoured as to become the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, " Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel," Isa. vii. 14. The Gospel informs us of the accomplishment of this prophecy. The angel came to Mary, and said unto her, " Hail, thou that art highly favoured : the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women." And when Mary, astonished at the appearance of the angel, and much more at his message, pondered in her mind what this salutation could mean, " the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David : and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Luke i. 26—33. And thus, as it is

said in the Collect, " we have known the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by the message of an angel ;" whom God sent for this express purpose, to announce it to the blessed Virgin Mary, who was so highly favoured as to become the mother of our Lord and Saviour.

Q. Having thus known the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what benefits do we pray for in this Collect, as connected with that knowledge.

A. We beseech the Lord to " pour his grace into our hearts," that as we have known the incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, " so, by his cross and passion, we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection." It is a great thing, in this age of infidelity, when so many deny the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, to know and be persuaded that he was not a mere man, born into the world as all other men are : but that he was indeed the Son of God, equal in all respects to the Father ; and that when he took our nature upon him, and became incarnate, it was by the Holy Ghost. But the mere knowledge of this as an historical fact, will be in itself of very little use to us. The true believer knows this in a practical way : he knows the reason why Christ became incarnate, was that he might suffer and die to make atonement for our sins, and " by his cross and passion " bring all that believe in him " unto the glory of his resurrection." Accordingly he lives continually a life of faith upon him, and being convinced by the Holy Spirit of his own sinfulness and need of a Saviour, he pleads the merits of the death and passion of Christ upon the cross, that thereby he may not only receive the pardon of his sins, but be raised by his grace, " from the death of sin to a life of righteousness " here, and at last be raised to a life of glory hereafter. For this purpose, we pray unto God to " pour his grace into our hearts," that we may have such a practical knowledge of Christ, as with St. Paul to say, " the life which I now live in

the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. These things we ask "through the same Jesus Christ our Lord," whose wonderful incarnation we have known "by the message of an angel," and by whose meritorious "cross and passion" we hope to be made partakers of his glorious resurrection, and to dwell with him in life everlasting.

SAINT MARK'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast instructed thy holy church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelist Saint Mark ; Give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What benefit has God conferred upon his "holy church," by his "Evangelist St. Mark?"

A. He has "instructed" it by "the heavenly doctrine" of this Evangelist. It was among the gifts which our Lord Jesus Christ procured for men at his Ascension, (as the Epistle for this day teaches us) that his church should be supplied with various means for its instruction and edification : "He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ;" and these gifts were bestowed, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv.

11—13. Accordingly, St. Mark was one of those whom the Lord appointed to be an Evangelist, to write the history of his Gospel, and to instruct the church with the “heavenly doctrine” which is contained in those divine sayings, which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ spake when he was upon earth.

Q. How do we pray to receive this heavenly doctrine?

A. We pray Almighty God to “give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of his holy Gospel.” This prayer comprehends the remaining part of the Epistle before cited; “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ,” Eph. iv. 14, 15. Those persons who neglecting the appointed means of reading the Scriptures, accompanied with earnest prayer to God that they may understand them, have but a superficial knowledge of the truths of the Gospel, and therefore are ready to listen to any plausible doctrine that crafty men may invent, are here compared to children, who have no solid judgment, but are tossed to and fro, and carried away by any idle tale that is told them. This unsettled state of mind, we pray that God will give us grace to avoid, and to establish us in the truth of his holy Gospel; giving us clear and solid views of religion; that we may be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear,” 1 Pet. iii. 15; knowing in whom we have believed, 2 Tim. i. 12; and being persuaded of the truth of that doctrine which God has revealed in his holy word: all which we ask, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Amen.

SAINT PHILIP AND SAINT JAMES'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, whom truly to know is everlasting life ; Grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life ; that following the steps of thy holy Apostles Saint Philip and Saint James, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life ; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does this Collect teach us that everlasting life consists in ?

A. In the true knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ. Christ alone can give us this divine knowledge, as he himself declares in that intercessory prayer which he offered up for his disciples, before his passion ; when he solemnly “ lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee : As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,” John xvii. 1—3.

Q. How do we pray that we may know Jesus Christ the Son of God ?

A. We pray that Almighty God will grant us “ perfectly to know him to be the way, the truth, and the life.” Our Lord Jesus Christ (in the Gospel for this day) said to his disciples, when he was about to leave them and to go to his heavenly Father, “ Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” But Thomas, not rightly apprehending his meaning, said to him,

" Lord, we know not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 4—6. Christ is the *Way* of approach to God. He is also the *Truth* : and not only every other method of coming to the Father, whether by trusting to our own obedience, or relying on the general mercy of God, is a false way of approach to him, which God has neither appointed, nor will accept ; but Christ is himself the Truth, being, as he says of himself, " He that is holy, (and) He that is true : " Rev. iii. 7. and as his beloved disciple says of him, He is " The true God, and eternal life." 1 John v. 20. He is the *Life* ; a living as well as a true way of coming to God ; and the Life itself, so that, as he says, " he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." John xi. 25, 26. We pray, therefore, that God will " grant us perfectly to know him to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; " that we may never dare to approach God in any other way than that which he has appointed through his dear Son :—that " having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having a high priest over the house of God ; " we may " draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith ; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. x. 19—22.

Q. For what end do we pray thus to know our Lord Jesus Christ " to be the way, the truth, and the life ? "

A. " That following the steps of the holy Apostles St. Philip and St. James, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord." St. Philip, " was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter ; " and very soon after our Lord had called him, he invited Nathanael

to come and see that Saviour, who was "the way, the truth, and the life; saying, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John i. 44, 45. St. James, whose name is here joined with St. Philip's, is not that Apostle who was the brother of John, and son of Zebedee; but is called by St. Paul, "the Lord's brother," Gal. i. 19, and was most probably a kinsman of our blessed Lord, (who were often called brethren by the Jews) yet with much humility he begins his Epistle by styling himself "a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ." James i. 1. These holy Apostles walked stedfastly in the way that leadeth to eternal life. St. James, in his Epistle, particularly exhorts us to *stedfastness* in faith and prayer; saying that "he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed," for "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," James i. 6, 8. We pray, therefore, that we may follow their steps, knowing our Lord Jesus Christ to be "the way, the truth, and the life;" and walking stedfastly in him, "rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as we have been taught," Col. ii. 7. "through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SAINT BARNABAS THE APOSTLE.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD God Almighty, who didst endue thy holy Apostle Barnabas with singular gifts of the Holy Ghost; Leave us not, we beseech thee, destitute of thy manifold gifts, nor yet of grace to use them alway to thy honour and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. With what did Almighty God endue his "holy Apostle Barnabas?"

A. "With singular gifts of the Holy Ghost." St. Barnabas was endued not only with great talents and abilities, to qualify him for a minister and an apostle; but he was possessed also of great grace and holiness. His character is represented in a very striking manner in the Epistle for this day, where we find he was sent from the church at Jerusalem to Antioch, they having heard that a great number of the Grecians in that city had been converted to the faith of Christ. When, therefore, Barnabas came among them, "and had seen the grace of God," so eminently bestowed upon them in their turning unto the Lord, he "was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man,"—not merely a moral man, honest and upright in the sight of his fellow-creatures, which is commonly all that the world in general think necessary to constitute a man good: he was all this; but he was a great deal more; a man "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," Acts ii. 22—24; and so a *good* man in the estimation of God. Having these "singular gifts," the Holy Ghost was pleased to "separate" him, together with St. Paul, "for the work" of an Apostle, Acts xiii. 2: to whom the church at Jerusalem bore this remarkable testimony, that they were "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xv. 26. Nevertheless, this good man was but a *man*, for the Scriptures (unlike the books of human composition, which either extenuate or conceal the faults of those whose histories they relate) inform us that Barnabas had a very sharp contention with St. Paul, about taking with them "John, whose surname was Mark," so "that they departed asunder one from the other," Acts xv. 37—41. Yet even this was overruled for good, for from this circumstance the Gospel

was spread by each of these Apostles in different directions, and obtained a wider circulation.

Q. How came St. Barnabas to have such "singular gifts of the Holy Ghost?"

A. We acknowledge in the Collect, that it was the "Lord God Almighty" who endued him with them. They were not acquired by his own abilities or holiness; but were given to him by God. So our Saviour told his disciples, in that portion of Scripture appointed as the Gospel for this day, saying, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," John xv. 16; and so it is with respect to all the gifts and graces which God bestows upon his people.

Q. What do we pray God not to leave us destitute of?

A. First, of his "manifold *gifts*;" that in whatsoever station of life the providence of God shall be pleased to place us, we may have such gifts as are suited to that particular station. St. Paul told the Corinthians, that he "would not have" them "ignorant concerning spiritual gifts," and exhorted them to "covet earnestly the best gifts," 1 Cor. xii. 1, 31. And again; to "desire spiritual gifts, but rather that they might prophesy," 1 Cor. xiv. 1; which does not mean there the gift of foretelling future events, but of instructing others in the truths of the Gospel, that they may be edified, which is often meant by the word prophesying. It is true, many of those gifts which were then bestowed upon the Christian church are not given now, such as the gifts of healing, working of miracles, and speaking with tongues; which would be presumption and enthusiasm in any of us to expect; but the gifts of spiritual wisdom and knowledge, with those various talents which are needful to our different occupations in the church or in society, we must still pray for, beseeching Almighty God, who is the giver of them all, not to leave us destitute of them.

Q. What do we pray God not to leave us destitute of besides?

A. We beseech him also not to leave us destitute "of *grace*, to use" those gifts which he has bestowed upon us, "always to his honour and glory." Gifts without grace, will not only do us no good, but increase our condemnation; as our Lord has taught us in the Parable of the Talents, where the unprofitable servant, though he did not lose the talent committed unto him, but only buried it in the earth, yet because it had not been improved for his master's benefit, was "cast into outer darkness," where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matt. xxv. 14—30. "Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given unto us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation. He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness," Rom. xii. 6—8. Whatsoever our gifts are, whether time, money, influence, talents, or any thing else which God has bestowed upon us, let us pray for "grace to use them always to his honour and glory;" remembering that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," 1 Cor. xii. 7. Let us not be puffed up with our gifts, as if they came from ourselves, and not from God; "for who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. But let us always endeavour to glorify God; for the gifts which he bestows upon us, are like the splendid apparel with which a great king adorns his attendants; not that they may be admired, but to display the magnificence of their sovereign. And as we pray that God will not leave us "destitute of his manifold gifts;" so we pray, at the same time, that

he will not leave us destitute “ of grace to use them always to his honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of repentance ; Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life ; that we may truly repent according to his preaching ; and after his example, constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does the Collect say of the birth of St. John the Baptist ?

A. That “ by God's providence he was wonderfully born.” His parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, of whom this honourable testimony is given, that “ they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” were too old to expect a child ; but as nothing is impossible with God, when Zacharias, who was a priest, was ministering unto the Lord in the Temple, an angel was sent to tell him that he should have a son, and should call his name John. The angel also said unto him, “ Thou shalt have joy and gladness ; and many shall rejoice at his birth : for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink ; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.” These things

appeared so strange to Zacharias, that he could not believe them, but asked of the angel a sign ; who gave him one that not only confirmed his faith, but reproved his unbelief ; for he was made dumb till the child was born ; and then, when his kinsfolk would have called the child Zacharias, after his father, " he wrote on a writing table, saying, His name is John : and they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." So wonderful did the birth of John the Baptist, and the circumstances attending it, seem to all who heard them, that they " laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be ? And the hand of the Lord was with him," Luke i. 6, 14, 15, 63, 66.

Q. For what purpose was John the Baptist so " wonderfully born ?"

A. That he might be " sent to prepare the way of the Son of God our Saviour, by preaching of repentance." Two prophets in particular prophesied this of him ; Isaiah says, " The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," Isa. xl. 3 ; and Malachi, " Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet (that is, John the Baptist, whom Elijah prefigured, Matt. xi. 14.) before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord ; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," Mal. iv. 5, 6. And the angel recited this prophecy to his father Zacharias in nearly the same words, Luke i. 16, 17. Accordingly John the Baptist came " preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He exhorted them to *true* repentance, saying, " Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance : " and pointed them to Christ, who alone could give them repentance and salvation : " I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance ; but he that cometh after me is

mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," Matt. iii. 1, 2, 8, 11. Thus did St. John the Baptist prepare the way of our Saviour, as his father Zacharias spake of him ; " And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins," Luke i. 76, 77.

Q. What do we pray God to make us to follow ?

A. " His doctrine and holy life." We beseech him " to make us so to follow his doctrine, that we may truly repent according to his preaching ; " not putting off the great work of repentance, or thinking we have no need of it, because of our privileges as professing Christians ; like the Jews, who were continually boasting that they had Abraham for their father ; but remembering, that " now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees : therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire," Matt. iii. 9, 10 ; so shall it be with all those who do not truly repent of their sins, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the pardon of them.

Q. How do we pray God to make us follow his " holy life ? "

A. That " after his example," we may " constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake." St. John the Baptist, " when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism," though many of them, and particularly the Pharisees, were held in great estimation among the people ; yet would not flatter them, nor pay them any vain compliments for their attendance on his ministry : on the contrary, he boldly rebuked the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in general, and " said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come ? " He told them also the plain truth, without which it was in vain to come to his

baptism, neither would their being the descendants of Abraham be of any avail to them ; " Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance," Matt. iii. 7, 8. He was also the same plain and faithful preacher before King Herod, who " feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and a holy, and observed him ; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly," Luke vi. 20. Nevertheless, John would not act against his conscience to gain the favour of this wicked prince ; but when he found that Herod was living in adultery with his brother Philip's wife, he spake the truth, and boldly said to him, " It is not lawful for thee to have her," Matt. xiv. 4 ; though for this rebuke he was thrown into prison, and afterwards put to death. For Herodias, the wife of Philip, had on this account a quarrel against him, and instructed her daughter who pleased Herod in a foolish and wanton dance, at an entertainment given in honour of his birthday,—(which, by the way, may teach us something of the folly and danger of such entertainments) to ask the head of John the Baptist ; and accordingly, an executioner was sent immediately by the king, who beheaded him in the prison ; and thus did this faithful servant of God " patiently suffer for the truth's sake." It becomes those especially who are called to the important office of ministers of Christ, to consider the example of this holy prophet, and to pray for grace to imitate it. And not only they, but all Christians in every station of life, should pray to God, that, after this example, they may " constantly speak the truth," deal faithfully with all men, and never be guilty of any deceit or flattery : that they may also " boldly rebuke vice," never encourage sin in others, but, as they have opportunity, faithfully reprove it ; and if this sincere and upright conduct should give offence, then be ready, " patiently to suffer for the truth's sake, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is true, this will most likely bring upon them the displeasure of the world, and hinder

their advancement in it ; but let them remember, that St. John the Baptist was more happy in a dungeon, than Herod seated upon his throne and surrounded with his courtiers. And if we are enabled by Divine grace to follow his example, we shall have what is of more value than all the world, the testimony of a good conscience here, and the approbation of God both here and hereafter.

SAINT PETER'S DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock ; Make, we beseech thee, all bishops and pastors diligently to preach thy holy word, and the people obediently to follow the same ; that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory : through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What did " Almighty God give to his Apostle St. Peter, by his Son Jesus Christ ? "

A. " Many excellent gifts." One of the most remarkable is mentioned in the Gospel for this day, where St. Peter, in answer to the question which Christ put to his disciples, " Whom say ye that I am ? " made that good confession, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : " (that is, Simon son of Jona) " for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter ; and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell

shall not prevail against it." And then our Lord promised him these remarkable gifts, saying, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. xvi. 16—19.

Q. What did our Lord Jesus Christ command him to do?

A. He commanded him "earnestly to feed his flock." After our Lord was risen from the dead, he showed himself to certain of his disciples as they were fishing ; and after they had dined, he said to St. Peter three times following, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and upon Peter's answering him, "Yea, Lord : thou knowest that I love thee ;" Jesus said unto him, "Feed my lambs," and again, "Feed my sheep," John xxi. 15—17. Accordingly, St. Peter, in obedience to this command, discharged the office of a faithful pastor. Under the preaching of this Apostle, no less than "three thousand souls were added" to the flock of Christ on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 41 ; afterwards, the number increased to "five thousand," Acts iv. 4 ; and again, we read that "believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women ; insomuch, that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter, passing by, might overshadow some of them," Acts v. 14, 15. Thus this Apostle went on, publishing the glad tidings of salvation, unmoved by the sufferings to which he was exposed, and undaunted by the threatenings of his adversaries. He seems always to have kept in mind the words which Christ spake unto him, "feed my sheep ;" and with much affection, presses the same charge on the elders, or ministers of the church. "Feed," says he, "the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind,"

1 Pet. v. 2. And in his second Epistle, he shows all Christians how diligent he was to feed the flock himself, as long as he was in the tabernacle of the body ; “ Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance,” 2 Pet. i. 13—15. And thus he obeyed the command which our Lord Jesus Christ had given him, “ earnestly to feed his flock.”

Q. What do we pray for, from this example of St. Peter.

A. First, for “ all bishops and pastors,” that God will make them “ diligently to preach his holy word.” There are two things particularly to be observed in this prayer : the first is, *what* we pray that all bishops and pastors may preach, namely, God’s “ holy word.” St. Peter particularly notices this, when he says, “ We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 2 Pet. i. 16 ; and in his first Epistle he says, that “ the Gospel ” was preached unto them, “ with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven : ” and again, “ The word of the Lord endureth for ever : and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you,” 1 Pet. i. 12, 25. So we pray that all bishops and pastors may preach the same word now ; not amusing their hearers with vain reasonings, fine speculations, or heathen philosophy, but feeding their flocks with the plain truths of the Gospel ; such as,—the fallen state of man by nature and practice, the only way of his recovery through Jesus Christ, the necessity of regeneration and sanctification by the influences of the Holy Spirit, and all things which accord with the pure, simple, and unadulterated word of God.—The second particular is, the *manner* in which we pray that all bishops and pastors may preach the word ; and that is, *diligently*. St. Paul charged Timothy, who was ordain-

ed the first bishop of the Ephesian church : " Preach the word : be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 2. Indeed, it is commonly the case, that lazy preaching betrays unsound doctrine ; for where a minister has clear views of the truths of the Gospel, the sense of its importance will excite him to zeal, activity, and diligence in preaching it. We pray that *God* will make them diligently to preach his holy word, for he only can do it : " Our sufficiency," says St. Paul, " is of God ; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament," 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. And again, " But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," 2 Cor. iv. 7.

Q. What do we pray for in the next place, in this Collect ?

A. Having prayed for " bishops and pastors," we pray next for " the people ;" that they may " obediently follow the same." The end of hearing the word of God, is to obey it ; and as, on the one hand, it is a great source of grief to a faithful minister of Christ, when he finds his people are no better for his instructions ; so, on the other, he has no greater joy than when they receive and obey the Gospel. Thus St. John said, " I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," 3 John 4 ; and St. Peter particularly exhorts those to whom he wrote, to be " as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance : but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation," 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. And after speaking of the word of God which was preached unto them, he instructs them how to receive it ; " Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

Q. For what end do we offer up this prayer for pastors and their people?

A. That both the one and the other "may receive the crown of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." To the faithful ministers of Christ, St. Peter gives this encouragement, that "when the chief Shepherd," Jesus Christ, "shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 4; and to the people of God, who obey his word, and "give diligence to make their calling and election sure," he says, that "so an entrance shall be ministered unto them abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. i. 10, 11; through his merits, and for his sake.

SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, O merciful God, that as thine holy Apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, without delay was obedient unto the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him; so we, forsaking all worldly and carnal affections, may be evermore ready to follow thy holy commandments; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is here mentioned of the "holy Apostle St. James?"

A. That he left "his father and all that he had," and "without delay was obedient unto the calling of" our Lord "Jesus Christ, and followed him." St. James, with his brother John, were fishermen, and partners with Peter and Andrew; and when our Lord called them, they were "in a ship, with Zebedee, their father,

mending their nets ; and they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him," Matt. iv. 21, 22. Thus did this Apostle "leave his father and all that he had," notwithstanding they had just taken such a miraculous draught of fishes that their net brake, and both the ships were filled so full that they began to sink ; but they obeyed without delay the call of Christ, "and when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him," Luke v. 11.

Q. What do we pray for grace to follow, after St. James's example ?

A. That, "forsaking all worldly and carnal affections, we may be evermore ready to follow God's holy commandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The commandments of God are all "holy, and just, and good," Rom. vii. 12 ; but the nature of man, through the fall, is just the reverse : his affections are worldly and carnal ; "for we know that the law is spiritual : but I am carnal, sold under sin," Rom v. 14. This being the case, God's commandments are opposed to our worldly and carnal affections, which we must forsake, in order to obey the will of God. Sometimes we must sacrifice some worldly interest, and give up some temporal advantage, that we may be ready to follow God's holy commandments : in that case, we must pray that we may imitate the example of St. James, who gave up all that he had ; and that too, when, by the miraculous draught of fishes, he had more success in his trade than ever he had before. So when carnal affections stand between us and God, we must pray for grace to give them up likewise, remembering, that it is better "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin," which are but "for a season ;" and that even "the reproach of Christ" is "greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," Heb. xi. 25, 26 ; so shall we be "ready evermore to follow God's holy commandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy word ; Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy church, to love that word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What did Almighty God give his Apostle Bartholomew grace to do ?

A. " Truly to believe, and to preach " his " word." Although the Scriptures record nothing more of St. Bartholomew, than that " he was chosen by our Lord to be an Apostle," Matt. x. 3. and, accordingly, sent out with the other disciples, to preach the Gospel and work miracles ; yet this is sufficient to assure us, that God gave him " grace truly to believe and to preach his word." God gave him grace to *believe* it. He was assured that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God : and manifested his faith by continuing with him, and with his disciples after his resurrection and ascension into heaven ; for when St. Peter preached that memorable sermon on the day of Pentecost, he stood up, not alone, but in company with the eleven Apostles, (and consequently, St. Bartholomew was amongst their number) all bearing testimony to the important truths which were then delivered, Acts ii. 14. God gave him grace also to *preach* his word ; and having ordained him to be an apostle, he went forth where he was appointed, and published salvation through Jesus Christ, in whom he had believed as his Lord and Saviour.

Q. What do we pray that God will " grant unto his church ?"

A. First, "to love that word" which St. Bartholomew "believed." All who love God will be sure to love his word: "Thy word," says David, "is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it," Psalm cxix. 140; and Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food," Job. xxiii. 12. The true Christian loves to read the word of God: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night," Psalm i. 2. He loves also to attend the Lord's house, where he may hear his word faithfully preached; and can say with David, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth," Psalm xxvi. 8; or with those spoken of by the prophet, who say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Isa. ii. 3.

Q. What do we further pray for the church of God?

A. Not only that it may love the word of God, but also "preach and receive the same." The preaching of the word is one of the greatest blessings which God bestows upon his church; for without it, the most flourishing churches will quickly fall to decay, and the people perish in ignorance and unbelief. "By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," men are "born again," 1 Pet. i. 23; and therefore it becomes us earnestly to pray, that God will be pleased to continue the preaching of it in his church. We pray also, that the church of God may *receive* the same. St. Paul thanks God for the manner in which the Thessalonians received his word: "For this cause also, thank we God without ceasing; because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe," 1 Thess. ii. 13. The Bercians also "received

the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so : therefore many of them believed," Acts xvii. 11, 12. God grant that his church may still receive his word in the same manner, and both love it, and preach it ; " through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SAINT MATTHEW THE APOSTLE.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an Apostle and Evangelist ; Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same, thy Son Jesus Christ ; who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.
Amen.

Q. How did " Almighty God " call St. Matthew the Apostle ?

A. He called him " by his blessed Son, from the receipt of custom, to be an Apostle and Evangelist." St. Matthew was a publican ; that is, a tax-gatherer under the Roman government ; and as he was attending the duties of his office, " sitting at the receipt of custom," our blessed Lord passed by, not by accident, but with a design to call him to be an Apostle and Evangelist ; " and he saith unto him, Follow me ; and he arose, and followed him," Matt. ix. 9, 10. It appears, that St. Matthew was rich, for St. Luke tells us that he made our Saviour " a great feast in his own house : and there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that sat down with them ; " whom he had no doubt invited, that they, as well as himself,

might have the benefit of our Saviour's conversation, and hear the glad tidings of salvation from his own Divine mouth. But the publicans in general were guilty of great oppression and injustice, not only taking what was due to the state, but unlawfully seizing what they had no right to, and enriching themselves by it; so that they were looked upon by the people as persons of the most abandoned and dishonest character. Accordingly, the "scribes and pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" But Jesus silenced this objection, saying unto them, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Luke v. 29—32. Thus St. Matthew was called "to be an Apostle and Evangelist," not only to preach the Gospel, but also to record the life and doctrine of our blessed Saviour, and to begin the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Q. What do we pray for grace to do, after St. Matthew's example?

A. "To forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ." Covetousness and the love of money is quite incompatible with the love of God, and has hindered many from following Christ. It is called "idolatry," Col. iii. 5. because it occupies the heart and the affections, which ought to be devoted unto God alone; and our blessed Saviour particularly warns us to "take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." And from the parable of the rich fool, who intended to "pull down his barns, and build greater," promising himself many years of future enjoyment, but who was cut off in the midst of his schemes, he teaches us how foolish it is for a man to lay up "treasure for himself," and not to be "rich towards God," Luke xii. 15—21. We learn, therefore, from the example of St. Matthew,

who forsook all that he had in obedience to the command of Christ, to pray for grace that we may also "forsake all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches:" remembering that they who suppose "that gain is godliness," or that it is to be preferred before godliness, are "men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth. But godliness, with contentment, is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." But, on the contrary, "they that will be rich," who are determined to get money, and make that their principal concern, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," 1 Tim. vi. 5—10. Such "covetous desires and inordinate love of riches," which would bring us into snares and temptations, foolish and hurtful lusts, cause us to err from the faith, pierce us through with many sorrows, prevent our following Christ, and in the end drown us in destruction and perdition; give us grace, O Lord, to forsake; "and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen"

SAINT MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

THE COLLECT.

O EVERLASTING God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; Mercifully grant, that as thy holy Angels always do thee service in heaven, so

by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does the Collect teach us of the “ services of angels and men ? ”

A. That God has “ ordained and constituted them in a wonderful order.” Angels, we are told in Scripture, are a higher order of beings than ourselves ; for when God made man, (or, as it is particularly spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he assumed our nature) he made him “ a little lower than the angels,” Psalm viii. 5. Heb. ii. 6—9. Angels, as St. Peter says, are “ greater in power and might,” 2 Pet. ii. 11. We are told also of the angels, that God “ maketh ” them “ spirits,” Psalm civ. 4 ; that they “ excel in strength, and do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his words,” Psalm ciii. 20. They are called “ holy angels,” Mark viii. 38 ; “ elect angels,” 1 Tim. v. 21 ; and their number is said to be “ innumerable,” Heb. xii. 22. Some of them are called “ archangels,” 1 Thess. iv. 16, as possessing greater power and dignity ; and St. Jude in his Epistle (which the church has selected as proper for this day) speaks of “ Michael the archangel,” who “ when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee,” Jude 9.*

* It is not certain whether Michael, of whom St. Jude speaks, was a created angel, or the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called an angel (or messenger, as the word signifies) in many parts of Scripture. If, as some think, this dispute literally took place between Michael and the devil, who contended for the body of Moses, in order to excite the Israelites to idolatry ; it may probably mean a created angel : but if, as others suppose, this passage refers to Zechariah iii. 1, 2, it can mean no other than Christ himself ; for the person who is called, verse 1, “ The angel of the Lord,” is in the second verse called Jehovah,

Q. How do the "holy angels always do God service in heaven?"

A. They adore him ; they stand in readiness to execute his commands ; and admire and praise him for his wonderful works. One of the inspired Apostles who was favoured to see heaven opened, says, " I beheld, and heard the voice of many *Angels* round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 11, 12. And again he says, " And all the *Angels* stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen : blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen," Rev. vii. 11, 12. Thus the angels of God adore and praise him in heaven. They also stand in readiness to execute his commands. They are " his ministers, that do his pleasure," Psalm ciii. 21 ; and are ready to undertake whatsoever the Lord is pleased to appoint them. One of them said to Zacharias, " I am Gabriel, that stand

" The Lord." It must, however, be acknowledged, that in the parallel passage to that of St. Jude, 2 Pet. ii. 11, the Apostle seems to allude to created angels. In the Gospel for this day, where Michael is again spoken of, as fighting with his angels, against the dragon and his angels, and overcoming them ; is commonly understood the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath conquered Satan, and enables his servants also to overcome him, " by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony," Rev. xii. 11. However, whether by Michael is meant Christ, or only a created angel, is of no great importance for us to know ; the principal thing for our instruction is, how unbecoming railing words are in the mouth of a Christian, when even Michael did not use them, though disputing with Satan himself.

in the presence of God ; and am sent to speak unto thee," Luke i. 19 ; and the same angel, " being caused to fly swiftly," Dan. ix. 21. appeared unto Daniel at the command of God. They also admire and praise the Lord for his wonderful works. When the work of creation was finished, the angels sang praises to God for his wisdom, power, and goodness displayed in it ; when he " laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," Job xxxviii. 4, 7. But when the work of redemption was unfolded to them, and they understood that the Son of God should take our nature upon him, in order that sinners might be saved through the shedding of his most precious blood, how great must have been their admiration and astonishment ! These " things the angels desire to look into," 1 Pet. i. 12 ; and accordingly we find that they took a particular interest in whatsoever related to our Lord Jesus Christ. An angel foretold his incarnation, (Luke i. 26—38 ;) an angel announced his birth to the shepherds, and with " a multitude of the heavenly host, sang, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men," Luke ii. 13, 14. When Christ had overcome the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, " angels came and ministered unto him," Matt. iv. 11. When he was in an agony in the garden, an angel was sent to strengthen him, Luke xxii. 43. When he arose from the dead, " the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it," Matt. xxviii. 2. Angels attended him also at his ascension into heaven, Acts i. 10. where they are now adoring and praising his name ; and when he shall come at the last day to judgment, " all the holy angels " shall come " with him," Matt. xxv. 31 ; for " the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire," 2 Thess. i. 7, 8 : he shall " descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of

God," 1 Thess. iv. 16. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works," Matt. xvi. 27.

Q. What do we pray God that his holy angels may do for us?

A. We beseech him "mercifully" to "grant, that as they always serve him in heaven, so by his appointment they may succour and defend us on earth." God has often employed the ministry of angels for the support and deliverance of his people. When Lot was in Sodom, that wicked city, where "in seeing and hearing, his righteous soul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds," 2 Pet. ii. 8; the Lord sent two angels to deliver him out of it, Gen. xix. 1. When Jacob was on his way to the land of Canaan, a host of angels met him, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. When the king of Syria sent an army to take Elisha the prophet, the Lord gave him a guard of angels, "horses and chariots of fire," 2 Kings vi. 17. to protect him. When king Hezekiah was threatened and besieged by the king of Assyria with a very great army, an angel slew of them in one night "a hundred four score and five thousand," and Hezekiah was delivered, 2 Kings xix. 35. When Peter and John were thrown into prison by the High Priest, "the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth," Acts v. 19. And when afterwards St. Peter was imprisoned by Herod, with intent to kill him; that very night before he was to be slain, the angel of the Lord came to him, unloosed his chains, and set him at liberty, Acts xii. 6—11. Thus, in various instances, God has delivered his people by the ministry of angels; and we have reason to believe that he still employs them in their behalf: "Are they not all ministering spirits," says the Apostle, "sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. And the Psalmist says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about

them that fear him, and delivereth them," Psalm xxxiv. 7. It is true, we do not now see them with our bodily eyes, as was the case in old time; nor are believers defended by them in a miraculous manner; but yet both Scripture and our church teach us that it is one of the peculiar privileges of God's people to have angels to attend them; nor can they tell how many dangers they are preserved from by their means. When believers die, we are assured that angels carry them into heaven, Luke xvi. 22; and at the last day angels will be employed in gathering together God's elect "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," Matt. xxiv. 31. But this blessing belongs only to true believers. As to the wicked we have no reason to suppose that angels attend them; but we know that they are under the influence of Satan, "the god of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4. To such persons angels have often been the executioners of Divine vengeance; and in the day of judgment, "the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xiii. 49, 50. But although angels have such great power, yet we must not worship them, or pray to them to help us, as the Romish Church does, for they are only creatures, and derive all their power from God, who appoints their ministrations for the good of his people: nor will they accept any adoration from us; as the angel said to St. John, when he fell at his feet to worship him, "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God," Rev. xix. 10. To him therefore we pray that, "by his appointment," we may always have his holy angels to "succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who calledst Luke the physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and physician of the soul ; May it please thee, that by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed ; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What does the Collect inform us of Saint Luke ?

A. That he was a physician ; and to the account of his profession adds this honourable testimony, that his " praise is in the Gospel." St. Paul calls him " the beloved physician," Col. iv. 14 ; and the same apostle, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, viii. 18, says, " We have sent with " Titus " the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches ; " which is generally supposed to be spoken of St. Luke, and accordingly our church applies it in the Collect to him.

Q. What office did Almighty God call St. Luke unto ?

A. " To be an Evangelist and physician of the soul." Accordingly he wrote the Gospel which bears his name, and the Acts of the Apostles. We are not told the exact time when St. Luke was called ; but he speaks of himself as an " eye witness " of all that Christ did " from the beginning, and a minister of the word ; " who " had perfect understanding of all things from the very first ; " and was therefore particularly qualified to write them, " in order, that we might know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed," Luke i. 2—4.

Q. What benefits do we pray that we may derive from the doctrine delivered by this Evangelist ?

A. We pray that it may please God, "that by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed, through the merits of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord." This is an allusion to St. Luke's former profession of a physician ; and herein our church follows an example which frequently occurs in Scripture. Our souls are here said to be diseased. Sin, like a dreadful disorder, is as fatal to the soul as the most dangerous distemper is to the body ; and unless it be effectually cured, the end will be everlasting destruction ; for God has declared, that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. xviii. 4. David lamented his sins in a most pathetic manner, comparing them to a loathsome and offensive disease, and seemed to labour for expressions to testify how deeply he felt the guilt and corruption of sin. "There is no soundness," he says, "in my flesh, because of thine anger ; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head ; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness. I am troubled ; I am bowed down greatly ; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease ; and there is no soundness in my flesh," Psalm xxxviii. 3—7. And the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the people as sinners, says, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores," Isa. i. 5, 6. Such is the state of our souls as guilty before God : nor can any words convey a more suitable description of our condition as sinners. It is of the utmost importance that we believe this representation which the word of God makes of our souls : the very first step towards a cure, is to be sensible of our disease ; for "they that are whole need

not a physician, but they that are sick," Luke v. 31. It is a very easy matter to fancy ourselves whole ; but by so doing we shall only deceive ourselves, and the disease of sin will still remain within us to our destruction ; but if we feel our malady, and are looking for a remedy, God has provided an all-sufficient one in his holy word. The doctrine delivered therein is compared to " wholesome medicines," very different to that of the false prophets, of whom Jeremiah said, that they " healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace," Jer. viii. 11. The one great universal medicine prescribed in the Gospel is Christ himself. The Gospel points to him, as Moses of old pointed the Israelites to the brazen serpent in the wilderness, (Numb. xxi. 8, 9. John iii. 14, 15 :) and as there was no cure for them unless they looked to that remedy which God had provided, so there is none for us except we look unto Christ : " Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12. The Gospel also prescribes the manner in which we must take this remedy. We must receive Christ by a true and living faith ; " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 31. We must receive him with true repentance ; for " another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced," John xix. 37 ; " and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son," Zech. xii. 10. We must receive him also with humble obedience, as St. Paul did when he said, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" Acts ix. 6 ; and we must receive him, renouncing all our self-righteousness, and giving up whatsoever he shall be pleased to require us to part with, like the same apostle, who said, " What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ : yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the

loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 7—9. If we are thus enabled by the grace of God to take this medicine, which his holy word prescribes, we shall not fail to have what we here pray for, that "all the diseases of our souls may be healed, through the merits of Jesus Christ," the Son of God, and our Lord. He is both the medicine and the physician. He showed his Divine power when he was upon earth in healing the bodies of men, for none that came to him went away without a cure, but "as many as touched him were made perfectly whole," Matt. xiv. 36; and one in particular, who "had spent all her living upon physicians," and could not "be healed of any," was cured immediately on touching only the border of his garment, Luke viii. 43, 44. Christ is still the same: his power is not at all diminished; his blood "cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7; his grace is sufficient for us, 2 Cor. xii. 9; and if we apply unto him as his word directs us, he will heal all the diseases of our souls, and bring us to that happy place where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," for "the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquity," Isa. xxxiii. 24.

SAINT SIMON AND SAINT JUDE.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast built thy church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone; Grant us so to be joined together in

unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple, acceptable unto thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. Upon what foundation has Almighty God built his church ?

A. " Upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone," Eph. ii. 20. St. John saw in a vision the church represented as a great and glorious city, the wall of which " had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," Rev. xxi. 14. Not that the church derives its strength or stability from the apostles and prophets, much less that it builds any hopes of salvation upon them, (as the Romish Church maintains, presumptuously joining their merits with the merits of Christ) for in this sense Christ is the only foundation of his church ; as the same apostle who told the Ephesians that they were " built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," testified, saying, " other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 11. And in the same chapter he blames the Corinthians for glorying in their ministers above what they ought to have done ; one saying, " I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos ;" but, says he, while ye boast in this manner, " are ye not carnal ?" for " who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ? I have planted, Apollos watered : but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase," verses 4—7. The meaning, therefore, of the church being built " upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," is that it stands not upon the foundation of their persons, but of their doctrine ; that is, upon the word of God which they preached ; wherein they set forth " Jesus Christ himself as the head corner stone,"

the grand foundation and support of the church. Both the prophets in the Old Testament and the apostles in the New speak of Christ under this character. The prophet Isaiah says, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation," Isa. xxxviii. 16; and David said, "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes," Psalm cxviii. 22, 23. The passage Christ himself quoted as applying to him, Matt. xxi. 42; and St. Peter refers to both these passages of Scripture, 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7. and shows their application to Christ. Among the apostles who preached Jesus Christ as the foundation of his church, our attention is called this day to St. Simon and St. Jude. St. Simon is called "the Canaanite," Matt. x. 4, and Mark iii. 18; but St. Luke calls him "Zelotes," Luke vi. 15, probably on account of his zeal in religion, St. Jude is supposed to be the same apostle whom St. Mark calls "Thaddeus," Mark iii. 18; and St. Matthew, "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus," Matt. x. 3: He was the brother of James, as he himself says in his Epistle, Jude 1, which the church has appointed for this day.

Q. What do we pray for in this Collect?

A. That God will "grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto him, through Jesus Christ our Lord," "in whom," as St. Paul says, "all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together, for a habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. The blessing we here pray for, is, unity of spirit; a blessing at all times needful for the church of God; and which should be seriously considered by those well-meaning, though perhaps weak Christians, who on account of some indifferent things disturb the

peace of the church by withdrawing themselves from her communion. When, indeed, the Gospel of Christ becomes corrupted, and his institutions perverted, it is our duty to separate, as our own church has done from that of Rome: but not for such trifling reasons as because we may object to a form of worship, the garments worn by the minister, or certain rites and ceremonies, which are in themselves indifferent, and have been sanctioned by many wise and good men. We pray, therefore, that we may be "joined together in unity of spirit;" that as all true Christians are united unto Christ by his Spirit, so by the same Spirit they may be united to each other in the bonds of Christian love. The means whereby we pray that we may be thus joined together, is by the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. St. Paul, in particular, taught this doctrine to the Ephesians, exhorting them to endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" for these plain reasons, because "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," Eph. iv. 3—6. Lastly, the end for which we pray to be joined together in unity of spirit, is, "that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "To whom coming," as St. Peter says, "as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

ALL SAINTS' DAY.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast knit together thine Elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Q. What is the meaning of this festival, called "All Saint's Day?"

A. It is appointed by the church as the close of her Festivals, and the Collect for this day is the last of all her Collects. Having before commemorated the Apostles and principal Saints recorded in the New Testament, this day is set apart for the commemoration of All the Saints in general; not only those who are mentioned in Scripture, but all holy persons (for so the word Saint signifies) whatsoever, from the beginning to the end of the world.

Q. What are the Saints called in this Collect?

A. They are called God's "elect," that is, his chosen people; and they are elected for this very purpose, to be his saints, his holy people. St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Ephesians, whom he calls "the saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus," that God "hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love," Eph. j. 1—4. And in his Epistle to those believers who were at Rome, he tells them that they were "beloved of God, called to be saints," Rom. i. 7. And St. Peter addresses believers as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the

Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 2. All self-righteous persons, therefore, who are not sprinkled with the blood of Christ; and all unholy and wicked persons, who are not sanctified by his Spirit; are not among the number of Saints, or the "Elect people of God."

Q. What does the Collect teach us that God has done for his Elect?

A. He has "knit them together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son Christ our Lord." "The mystical body" of Christ is his Saints, or Elect, who make up his spiritual church, "which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," Eph. i. 23. They "are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30; and being united unto him by faith, have communion and fellowship with him, as the Apostle says, "Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. They have communion and intercourse with him in his appointed ordinances, wherein they send up their supplications to him, and receive from him those supplies of grace and strength of which they stand in need; and as God has united them in the mystical body of his Son Jesus Christ, so he has knit them together in brotherly love. This, St Paul tells us, is signified in the sacramental bread, which not only represents the body of Christ broken upon the cross for us, but also his mystical body, and that union and communion which true believers, who compose one body, have with him their living head. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. x. 17; even of Christ, "the living bread which came down from heaven," John vi. 51.

Q. How do we pray to God that we may follow his "blessed saints?"

A. We beseech him to gra^t us grace to follow them "in all virtuous and godly living." Saints, as was observed before, are holy persons, who are sanctified by God's Holy Spirit, by whom they are enabled to live a holy life in obedience to the will of God. In the Gospel for this day, our Saviour describes the character of his saints, and pronounces them blessed; and there is a beautiful connexion in the different features of their character, which is highly deserving of our notice. First, they are "poor in spirit;" humble, and sensible of their manifold sins and short-comings. On this account they "mourn," being heartily sorry that they have ever offended God, and grieved that there is still so much evil in them; with penitent hearts they look unto Christ for the pardon of their sins, and the salvation of their souls. They are also "meek;" for having such graces as poverty of spirit, and sorrow for sin, how can they be otherwise? They "hunger and thirst after righteousness." They are "merciful:" trusting themselves in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, they do not forget, as they have ability and opportunity, to show mercy to others. They are "pure in heart," sanctified and made holy by God's Holy Spirit. And they are "peace makers," Matt. v. 3—9: having peace with God through Christ, "they live peaceably with all men, so far as it is possible," Rom. xii. 18; and endeavour to promote peace and union with all around them. Such is the character of the saints whom Christ himself has pronounced blessed, and whom we pray for "grace to follow in all virtuous and godly living;" and we have this for our comfort, that the same grace which enabled them to live such virtuous and godly lives, is all-sufficient for us; and the same blessing which Christ pronounced on the^{se}, he will not fail to give unto us likewise, if, through his grace, our character does in some measure resemble theirs.

Q. For what end do we ask this grace of God?

A. That so following his "blessed saints," "we

may come to those unspeakable joys which "God has prepared for them that unfeignedly love" him, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Heaven is a place of joy unspeakable, or, as the Psalmist says, of "fulness of joy," Psalm xvi. 11; such as no tongue can describe, or imagination conceive. God has prepared it for those, and those only, who *unfeignedly* love him, as all his saints do; loving God with uprightness and sincerity of heart. In the Epistle for this day, we have set before us something of the nature of those unspeakable joys which God has prepared for them that unfeignedly love him. There is described the happiness of the saints of God, both of the Jews and Gentiles. The Jewish saints, out of all the tribes of Israel, are mentioned first, as being God's ancient people, and sealed with "the seal of the living God;" and afterwards the Gentiles, who are "a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb," Rev. vii. 2—10. Finally, as we pray that we may come to these unspeakable joys "through Jesus Christ our Lord," we are put in mind, that it is through him only that God has "prepared them for those who unfeignedly love him." The virtuous and godly lives of the most eminent saints did not purchase heaven for them; for had it not been for the merits of Christ, there would have been no place of happiness provided for man; and had it not been for the grace of God, none would have become saints, but still have remained "dead in trespasses and sins;" and as to mankind, heaven would have been prepared in vain. The saints acknowledge this in the passage before cited, ascribing the whole of their salvation to be due unto God and the Lamb; and in the same chapter, when one of the elders explained to St. John who they were, he said,

they "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple," Rev. vii. 14, 15. As, therefore, we pray for grace to imitate their holy lives, so we must pray also, that like them we may entirely rely on the blood of Christ for pardon and acceptance; remembering, that except we are washed in his blood, we shall be for ever excluded the glories of heaven. It is a solemn consideration, that we are all in the road either to heaven or hell. Soon we shall have done with all the busy scenes of life, and find ourselves fixed for ever in a state of happiness or misery—either in the presence of God, and among the company of saints and angels; or cast into that awful place of torment, burning with fire and brimstone, and surrounded with devils and condemned spirits. Let us then strive to live under the influence of these impressions, following the example of the saints of God here upon earth, that at the last we may join them in everlasting glory, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE END.

